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MP FILES CASE

Kejriwal's aide kicked, slapped me: Maliwal

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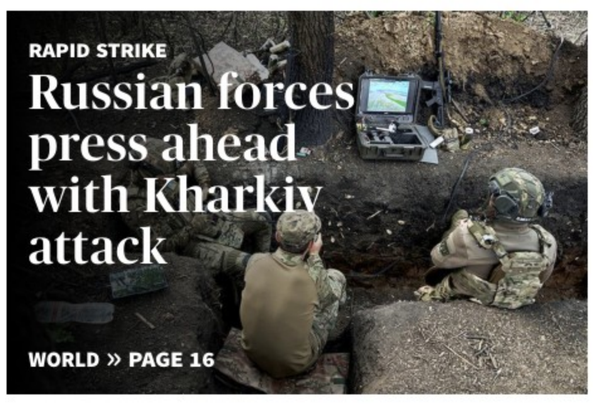

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Russian forces press ahead with Kharkiv attack

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The burning hills of Uttarakhand

Villagers keep up the fight as losses pile up

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EYE ON THE SKY

Rain threat looms over RCB-CSK match

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No grace marks for SSLC students from next academic year

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Karnataka saw a 10% point dip in the number of students clearing the first of three SSLC exams, with an overall pass percentage of 73.4. SUDHAKARA JAIN

The State government has decided to abolish the system of giving grace marks to students in class 10 (SSLC) exams from the academic year 2024-25.

At a meeting on Friday at Vidhana Soudha, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivkumar raised the issue of grace marks with Madhu Bangarappa, Minister of Primary and Secondary Education.

The Chief Minister came down heavily on the officials of the Department of School Education and Literacy (DSEL) for its "generous showering" of grace marks of up to 20% to boost the SSLC result this year, said sources.

According to sources, Mr. Siddaramaiah pointed out that two students from government-run schools had made it to the top spot this year which shows that anyone can achieve good results with hard work. Only those who work hard need to get marks, and there should be no grace marks from next year, Mr. Siddaramaiah ordered in the meeting.

He also said Deputy Directors of Public Instruction, Block Education Officers, principals and teachers should be made accountable for results.

When the Principal Secretary of DSEL said grace marks had been enhanced to 10% from 5% during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chief Minister sought to know whether there was COVID-19 now to follow the same logic.

Speaking to journalists later, Mr. Madhu Bangarappa said, "These are children who were in classes 6 and 7 during the COVID-19 pandemic. So obviously quality of teaching would have fallen. Not only have we given 20% grace marks, but we are allowing them to take second and third annual exams keeping this in mind. Second and third exams will continue, but not the grace marks from next year."

Karnataka saw a 10% point dip in the number of students clearing the first of three SSLC exams, with an overall pass percentage of 73.4%.

However, the dip would have been steeper – about 30 percentage points – if not for the government's decision to give grace marks of up to 20% as a one-time measure.

One of the reasons cited for the low pass percentage was the introduction of a new monitoring system of webcasting through CCTV in all examination centres to put a stop to malpractices.

RELATED REPORT ON
» PAGE 5

Why delay in uploading turnout data, SC asks EC

Association for Democratic Reforms notes there was also an unusually sharp spike in figures from the initial voter turnout percentages released by the poll panel, creating doubts about authenticity

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday orally asked the Election Commission (EC) to explain its inability to immediately upload on its website authenticated, scanned and legible account of votes recorded booth-wise after each phase of polling in the Lok Sabha election.

"Every Polling Officer submits [voting records] by the evening, after 6 or 7 p.m., by which time the polling is completed. The Returning Officer would then be having the data of the entire constituency. Why don't you upload it?" Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, heading a three-judge Bench, asked the apex poll panel's counsel.

Rule 49S and Rule 56C (2) of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961 require the Presiding Officer to prepare an account of votes recorded in Form 17C (Part I) format.

The question from the Bench was based on an application filed by NGO Association for Democratic Reforms, represented by advocates Prashant Bhushan, Neha Rathi and Cheryl D'Souza, alleging inordinate delay in the publication of voter turnout data of the first two phases of polling in the Lok Sabha election.

Call for clarity

The NGO has placed specific requests before the Supreme Court to avoid delays in publication of poll data

- Direct the EC to immediately upload on its website scanned legible copies of Form 17C Part-I of all polling stations after the close of polling of each phase
- Direct the EC to provide tabulated polling station-wise data in absolute figures of the number of votes polled
- EC should provide constituency-wise figures of turnout in absolute numbers

- Direct the EC to upload on its website scanned legible copies of Form 17C Part- II which contains the candidate-wise result of counting after the compilation of results

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NEARBY

Female foeticide racket unearthed in Mandya

BENGALURU
Despite a crackdown on illegal abortions in Karnataka over the past few months, female foeticide is going on unabated. A recent police case booked in Mandya district, where a group 'D' employee and an ambulance driver of a State-run hospital were involved, is testimony to this.

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PROPERTYPLUS » PAGE 2

ED tells SC it has evidence of Kejriwal's hawala links

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday informed the Supreme Court that it had unearthed direct evidence of "chats" between Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and hawala operators through whom kickbacks in the liquor policy case were paid. Mr. Kejriwal countered that the ED was making a last-ditch attempt to prejudice the court against him.

The submission by the ED in the Supreme Court coincided with the Central agency filing a supplementary chargesheet at Rouse Avenue court, formally naming Mr. Kejriwal and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) as accused in the money laundering case linked to the excise policy change in the national capital. The chargesheet was filed shortly after the ED informed the court of its intention to do so.

However, the Supreme Court Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta, while reserving its judgment on the petition filed by Mr. Kejriwal seeking to quash his arrest on March 21, gave him the option to apply for bail in accordance with law. The liberty was given to Mr. Kejriwal notwithstanding the fact that the verdict was reserved.

Mr. Kejriwal, if he chooses, can apply for bail under Section 45 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). He is already out campaigning for the Lok Sabha election on an interim bail allowed by the Supreme Court on May 10. He has to surrender on June 2. Bail under PMLA is applied for in the Special Court under Section 45 of the Act.

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SC to hear Hemant's petition for interim bail

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has decided it would hear on Tuesday a plea by former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren for interim bail to campaign in the ongoing Lok Sabha election.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for Mr. Soren, said that his client was willing to surrender on June 2.

FULL REPORT ON
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Spain blocks arms ship from Chennai to Israel

Dinakar Peri
Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Spain has refused entry to a ship carrying arms from Chennai to Israel to dock at one of its ports, its Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares has said.

The Denmark-flagged cargo ship *Marianne Danica* sailed from Chennai on April 8 and was headed to the port of Haifa in Israel, according to maritime tracking portals and Spanish media. Spain has been extremely critical of the rising civilian casualties due to the Israeli offensive in Gaza and, along with Belgium, has suspended arms export licences to Tel Aviv.

Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal only said that they have seen the report of the ship and will revert with more information.

Mr. Albares had said, "This will be a consistent policy with any ship carrying arms to Israel that wants to call at Spanish ports."

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BJP's freebie offers are not sustainable, says Pandian

Nistula Hebbar
BHUBANESWAR

The BJD's election promise of free power to 90% households in Odisha has provisions made for it in the State budget, party leader V.K. Pandian said. Speaking to *The Hindu*, he said what shocked him was the BJP's promise of a ₹50,000 "voucher" for two crore women in the State.

INTERVIEW ON
» PAGE 14

Accused in Anjali murder case nabbed

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

Girish Sawanth, accused in the murder of Anjali Ambiger, was nabbed in Davangere after he attempted to jump off a moving train following a scuffle with fellow passengers.

The Railway police did not initially recognise him, but he was identified by one of its officers as the accused in the murder case. The Hubballi-Dharwad police were then alerted. Subsequently, a team from Hubballi took custody of the accused, who has suffered injuries while he tried to escape, and brought him to the city. He is being treated at KIMS Hospital here.

Escape plan

Speaking to presspersons in Hubballi, Police Commissioner Renuka Sukumar said that the accused had planned to escape to either Goa or Mumbai and that the arrest was made with the help of Railway police. She said the accused was not in a condition to make any statement at the moment.

Proposal spurned

Twenty-year-old Anjali was stabbed to death on May 15 at her house in Veerapur Oni by Girish, who was reportedly enraged because she had spurned his marriage proposal. This incident happened just after another girl Neha Hiremath's murder in the district.

BJP's campaign

In another development, the BJP has blamed the drug menace in Hubballi-Dharwad as the reason for the killing of Neha Hiremath and Anjali.

Mahesh Tenginakai, MLA, has announced the launch of a special campaign against drug abuse from June in the twin cities.

Former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar, who met the victim's family, termed the incident a result of failure of law and order. President of Anjuman-E-Islam A.M. Hindasgeri and others too visited the victim's family on Friday.

Nearly 6 million trees disappeared from Indian farmlands in three years: study

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The study focussed on farmlands and tracked trees over the past three years.

In a mere three years, from 2019 to 2022, India may have lost close to 5.8 million full-grown trees in agricultural lands, says a satellite-imagery-based analysis by researchers at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, published this week in the peer-reviewed journal *Nature Sustainability*.

Additionally, 11% of such trees detected via satellite during 2010-2011 were no longer visible when reviewed from 2018 to 2022, leading the researchers to conclude that these trees had "disappeared".

However, this doesn't necessarily imply that India's overall tree cover is declining as the analysis was specific to only large trees above a certain size.

The Forest Survey of India (FSI) conducts regular surveys of tree cover but only publishes data on the changes in acreage and not individual trees. The latest FSI report says that India's tree cover has increased in 2021 over 2019.

The present analysis focuses on farmlands and tracks individual trees, albeit only big ones, relying on maps from multiple 'micro-satellites', and machine learning analysis to estimate trends, beginning in 2010. About 56% of India is covered by farmland and 22% by forest. With the largest agricultural area in the world, changes in tree cover here, while critical, have been largely "overlooked", the authors say.

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People of villages in Chikkamagaluru exhume bodies to 'please rain god'

Sathish G.T.
SHIVANI
(CHIKKAMAGALURU)

People distressed over drought and desperate to keep their areca plantations alive in parts of Ajjampura taluk in Chikkamagaluru district have resorted to a rather macabre superstitious practice of exhuming the bodies of those who had vitiligo from graveyards and consigning them to flames, believing that it brings good rain.

In the last 15 days, at least five bodies have been exhumed in parts of Ajjampura taluk. According to residents of Jaladihalli village, four bodies were exhumed in one night and then burnt within minutes. They maintain that the recent rains that the village received were a result of the custom they followed.

The spot where a body was burnt at Shivani village in Ajjampura taluk of Chikkamagaluru district. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

None allowed to record

Similarly, residents of Shivani, a hobli headquarters, exhumed the body of a woman who died a few months ago and consigned her mortal remains to flames on Thursday. "Hundreds of people witnessed the event. Surprisingly, within a couple of hours after completing the rituals, we received rain," said a resident of the village. However, he refused to respond when it was pointed out that many villages and cities received rain on the same day, though they had not followed this custom.

In some cases, the family members of the dead raised objections to removing the bodies.

However, the villagers convinced them, stating that it was being done in the interest of the entire village.

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M BG-BGE

GETTY IMAGES

Nelly Korda: golf's dominant superstar charting a course to greatness

The 25-year-old fell short of becoming the first woman to win six consecutive LPGA starts. But in tying Hall of Famers Nancy Lopez and Annika Sorenstam for the tour's longest winning streak, the reigning Olympic champion added to her legend and even made pop culture take notice

Reuters
Associated Press

When Nelly Korda arrived at the Upper Montclair Country Club last week, she knew she was on the verge of something truly momentous: she had a shot at becoming the first woman to win six consecutive LPGA starts, at the 72-hole Cognizant Founders Cup.

Korda came into the tournament having taken a fortnight off after winning the Chevron Championship. It was her second career Major triumph and her fifth straight title, tying her with Hall of Famers Nancy Lopez (1978) and Annika Sorenstam (2004-05) for the tour's longest winning streak. Byron Nelson holds golf's all-time mark with 11 straight wins in 1945.

> To get a streak like that in any sport is amazing with the amount of talent that I feel every athlete has in their sport. Hopefully one day it'll sink in

Victory run

Korda started her historic victory run at January's Drive On Championship in her hometown of Bradenton, Florida, then took a break before winning three times in as many weeks – at March's Seri Pak and Ford championships and in April's Match Play tournament.

When she doubled her collection of Majors with the Chevron win, adding to the 2021 Women's PGA Championship, the buzz around 'the streak' grew loud enough for pop culture to take notice. Korda became the first golfer since Tiger Woods to be invited to the Met Gala, the annual event that draws stars from the worlds of fashion, show business and sports.

So when the 25-year-old teed off at the Founders, the centre of all attention, she could have been forgiven for feeling just the tad distracted. After months of near-perfect play, she inexplicably hit bad drives, found bunkers from the fairway and missed short putts.

Rose Zhang, the two-time NCAA champion who won in her professional debut last year, put an official end to Korda's record-tying LPGA Tour winning streak, but the defeat did not diminish the World No. 1's achievement in the slightest; if anything, it shone a light on how exceptional it was.

As Zhang pointed out, "I just want to reiterate, it's so hard winning out here on tour. What Nelly is doing is something quite unheard of, and only two other players have done it before. It's so difficult and it's so rare. There is only one Nelly Korda."

Even in defeat at the Founders, Korda showed glimpses on the tricky Upper Montclair course of why she is such a formidable champion. Faced with a 10-stroke deficit starting her second round in the event that honours the tour's founding members, she shot a bogey-free 6-under 66 in cold, damp conditions. She eventually finished in a tie for seventh at 7-under.

Korda had no regrets about not making it six in a row. "Just to do that with all the competition out here is super, super rewarding with how much work that I've put in. To get a streak like that in any sport is amazing with the amount of talent every athlete has in their sport. Hopefully one day it'll sink in."

Athletic stock

Korda comes from good athletic stock – her father Petr, a former tennis player, won the 1998 Australian Open, her brother Sebastian is ranked in the ATP's top-30 and her sister Jessica is also a professional golfer – but she has married her physical gifts with a winner's attitude.

> In 2022 and 2023, golf really humbled me. [In] sports, there are ups and downs. Every athlete goes through the roller coaster, and that is what makes the sport so great

A phenomenal ball-striker with a silky-smooth, seemingly effortless swing, Korda has a reputation for using her short game to save par when in trouble. And despite not having tour-leading numbers on the green, she has been known to make clutch putts.

Simplifying her mental game, Korda said, had helped her find the right balance when competing on tour. Thinking too far ahead, she noted, had led her down deep rabbit holes in the past.

"When I'm home, I'm definitely practising a lot more and trying to work on technique," she said. "When I'm out here, the way I keep it simple is by not overdoing it. Going out, seeing the course, doing my work with my caddie, picking a game plan, and then that's it. I've gotten too caught up before thinking I need to do a little extra. Now, it's time to just see my shots and execute them.

"Not getting too ahead of myself and taking it a shot at a time. As boring as it sounds or as many times as you're going to hear me say it, that's the motto and I'm going to stick to it."

Korda's dominant 2024 follows two incredibly challenging seasons, which forced her to dig deep into her reserves of resilience. She started 2022 at No. 1, but then she missed four months with a blood clot in her left arm that required surgery. Struggling to regain her form, Korda went winless on the LPGA Tour last year, a campaign that was interrupted by a back injury.

"In 2022 and 2023, golf really humbled me," she said. "[In] sports, there are ups and downs. Every athlete goes through the roller coaster, and that is what makes the sport so great. You mature and grow so much and learn more about yourself."

Handling success

One thing Korda has been forced to learn about very quickly is handling success – both on the course and off it. "It's very hard mentally to be 100% after a win, especially playing in tough conditions. [It] just honestly feels like a blur. You have to take it day by day, stay very present."

Perhaps the bigger challenge for the reticent Korda is dealing with her new-found celebrity. Arguably the face of the LPGA, she is finding herself in unfamiliar surroundings having to do things that don't involve swinging a golf club.

She embraced it at the Met Gala, turning out in a red floral gown designed by Oscar de la Renta. "It was so, so crazy," she said. "You're seeing all these people you usually watch in TV shows or movies and they're like famous singers and you're starstruck the entire time. It was really, really neat to step outside of my comfort zone and do something like that."

But Korda also said that it was important for her to stay true to herself, not change because of the pressures of promoting the women's game.

"Listen, I feel like for me, the way that I promote the game is just the way I am. I'm never going to do something I'm not really comfortable with. I love seeing all the kids and I love promoting the game. I just hope I show people how much I enjoy being out here week in and week out competing against all the girls, practising, and hopefully that drives more attention to us."

Having already made history in 2024, Korda is eyeing more success. "We have some really amazing golf courses lined up for some of the Majors. Not just that, hopefully with the Olympics and Solheim [Cup]... It's a big year," said Korda, who is the defending Olympic gold medallist. "I'm not going to get too ahead of myself, but there is a lot of exciting stuff lined up."

STACKING UP

ATP Men's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Novak Djokovic	36	9,990	17
2	Jannik Sinner	22	8,860	19
3	Carlos Alcaraz	21	7,345	17
4	Daniil Medvedev	28	7,195	19
5	Alexander Zverev	27	5,435	26
6	Andrey Rublev	26	4,740	24
7	Casper Ruud	25	4,535	24
8	Stefanos Tsitsipas	25	3,860	25
9	Hubert Hurkacz	27	3,730	24
10	Grigor Dimitrov	32	3,605	22
11	Alex de Minaur	25	3,435	25
12	Holger Rune	21	3,250	23
13	Taylor Fritz	26	2,870	25
14	Ben Shelton	21	2,460	24
15	Ugo Humbert	25	2,455	28

Top Indians ▶

Sumit Nagal
Rank 93 ▼ 11 spots

Ramkumar Ramanathan
Rank 358 ▲ 2 spots

WTA Women's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Iga Swiatek	22	10,910	19
2	Aryna Sabalenka	26	7,498	17
3	Coco Gauff	20	7,313	19
4	Elena Rybakina	24	6,673	19
5	Jessica Pegula	30	4,655	22
6	Marketa Vondrousova	24	4,090	17
7	Qinwen Zheng	21	3,945	21
8	Maria Sakkari	28	3,925	24
9	Ons Jabeur	29	3,748	23
10	Jelena Ostapenko	26	3,493	23
11	Daria Kasatkina	26	3,313	24
12	Jasmine Paolini	28	3,048	28
13	Beatriz Haddad Maia	27	3,035	24
14	Karolina Muchova	27	2,930	11
15	Danielle Collins	30	2,759	18

Top Indians ▶

Ankita Raina
Rank 269 ▼ 11 spots

Sahaja Yamalapalli
Rank 315 ▼ 6 spots

English Premier League Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Man. City	37	27	7	3	93	33	60	88
2	Arsenal	37	27	5	5	89	28	61	86
3	Liverpool	37	23	10	4	84	41	43	79
4	Aston Villa	37	20	8	9	76	56	20	68
5	Tottenham	37	19	6	12	71	61	10	63
6	Chelsea	37	17	9	11	75	62	13	60
7	Newcastle	37	17	6	14	81	60	21	57
8	Man. United	37	17	6	14	55	58	-3	57
9	West Ham	37	14	10	13	59	71	-12	52
10	Brighton	37	12	12	13	55	60	-5	48
11	Bournemouth	37	13	9	15	53	65	-12	48
12	Crystal Palace	37	12	10	15	52	58	-6	46
13	Wolves	37	13	7	17	50	63	-13	46
14	Fulham	37	12	8	17	51	59	-8	44
15	Everton *	37	13	9	15	39	49	-10	40
16	Brentford	37	10	9	18	54	61	-7	39
17	N. Forest *	37	8	9	20	47	66	-19	29
18	Luton Town	37	6	8	23	50	81	-31	26
19	Burnley	37	5	9	23	40	76	-36	24
20	Sheffield	37	3	7	27	35	101	-66	16

* Everton deducted eight points and Forest deducted four points following breaches of the PL's Profitability and Sustainability Rules

Italian Serie A Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Inter Milan	36	29	5	2	86	19	67	92
2	AC Milan	36	22	8	6	72	43	29	74
3	Bologna	36	18	13	5	51	27	24	67
4	Juventus	36	18	13	5	49	28	21	67
5	Atalanta	35	19	6	10	65	39	26	63
6	Roma	36	17	9	10	63	44	19	60
7	Lazio	36	18	5	13	47	37	10	59
8	Fiorentina	35	15	8	12	53	40	13	53
9	Napoli	36	13	12	11	53	46	7	51
10	Torino	36	12	14	10	33	32	1	50
11	Genoa	36	11	13	12	43	44	-1	46
12	Monza	36	11	12	13	39	48	-9	45
13	Lecce	36	8	13	15	32	52	-20	37
14	Verona	36	8	10	18	34	48	-14	34
15	Udinese	36	5	18	13	35	52	-17	33
16	Cagliari	36	7	12	17	38	65	-27	33
17	Frosinone	36	7	11	18	43	68	-25	32
18	Empoli	36	8	8	20	26	52	-26	32
19	Sassuolo	36	7	8	21	42	72	-30	29
20	Salernitana	36	2	10	24	28	76	-48	16

Spanish LaLiga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Real Madrid	36	29	6	1	83	22	61	93
2	Barcelona	36	24	7	5	74	43	31	79
3	Girona	36	23	6	7	75	45	30	75
4	Atletico Madrid	36	23	4	9	67	39	28	73
5	Athletic Bilbao	36	17	11	8	58	37	21	62
6	Real Sociedad	36	15	12	9	49	37	12	57
7	Real Betis	36	14	14	8	48	43	5	56
8	Villarreal	36	14	9	13	60	60	0	51
9	Valencia	36	13	9	14	37	40	-3	48
10	Getafe	36	10	13	13	41	51	-10	43
11	Alaves	36	11	9	16	34	45	-11	42
12	Sevilla	36	10	11	15	47	50	-3	41
13	Osasuna	36	11	8	17	40	54	-14	41
14	Las Palmas	36	10	8	18	32	46	-14	38
15	Rayo Vallecano	36	8	14	14	29	44	-15	38
16	Celta Vigo	36	9	10	17	42	54	-12	37
17	Real Mallorca	36	7	15	14	29	41	-12	36
18	Cadiz	36	6	14	16	25	49	-24	32
19	Granada	36	4	9	23	37	70	-33	21
20	Almeria	36	2	11	23	35	72	-37	17

German Bundesliga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Leverkusen	33	27	6	0	87	23	64	87
2	Bayern	33	23	3	7	92	41	51	72
3	Stuttgart	33	22	4	7	74	39	35	70
4	RB Leipzig	33	19	7	7	75	37	38	64
5	Dortmund	33	17	9	7	64	43	21	60
6	E. Frankfurt	33	11	13	9	49	48	1	46
7	Hoffenheim	33	12	7	14	62	64	-2	43
8	SC Freiburg	33	11	9	13	44	56	-12	42
9	Heidenheim	33	9	12	12	46	54	-8	39
10	FC Augsburg	33	10	9	14	49	58	-9	39
11	Werder Bremen	33	10	9	14	44	53	-9	39
12	Wolfsburg	33	10	7	16	40	53	-13	37
13	M'gladbach	33	7	13	13	56	63	-7	34
14	Bochum	33	7	12	14	41	70	-29	33
15	Mainz	33	6	14	13	36	50	-14	32
16	Union Berlin	33	8	6	19	31	57	-26	30
17	Cologne	33	5	12	16	27	56	-29	27
18	SV Darmstadt	33	3	8	22	30	82	-52	17

Test Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Kane Williamson	859	919
2	Joe Root	824	923
3	Babar Azam	768	882
3	Daryl Mitchell	768	804
5	Steve Smith	757	947
6	Rohit Sharma	751	813
7	Yashasvi Jaiswal	740	740
8	Dimuth Karunaratne	739	783
9	Virat Kohli	737	937
10	Harry Brook	735	773

Test Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	R. Ashwin	870	904
2	Josh Hazlewood	847	864
2	Jasprit Bumrah	847	881
4	Kagiso Rabada	834	902
5	Pat Cummins	820	914
6	Nathan Lyon	801	801
7	Ravindra Jadeja	788	899
8	James Anderson	739	903
9	Shaheen Afridi	733	836
10	Kyle Jamieson	729	836

ODI Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Babar Azam	824	898
2	Shubman Gill	801	847
3	Virat Kohli	768	909
4	Harry Tector	746	767
4	Rohit Sharma	746	882
6	Daryl Mitchell	728	750
7	David Warner	723	869
8	Pathum Nissanka	711	728
9	Dawid Malan	707	730
10	Rassie van der Dussen	701	796

ODI Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Keshav Maharaj	716	741
2	Josh Hazlewood	688	727
3	Adam Zampa	686	695
4	Mohammed Siraj	678	736
5	Jasprit Bumrah	665	838
6	Mohammad Nabi	656	657
7	Shaheen Afridi	650	688
8	Kuldeep Yadav	645	760
9	Trent Boult	643	775
10	Bernard Scholtz	642	642

T20I Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Suryakumar Yadav	861	910
2	Philip Salt	802	802
3	Mohammad Rizwan	781	875
4	Babar Azam	761	896
5	Aiden Markram	755	796
6	Yashasvi Jaiswal	714	739
7	Rilee Rossouw	689	724
8	Jos Buttler	680	687
9	Reeza Hendricks	660	674
10	Dawid Malan	657	915

T20I Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Adil Rashid	726	746
2	Wanindu Hasaranga	687	797
3	Akeal Hosein	664	683
4	Axar Patel	660	667
5	Maheesh Theekshana	659	684
5	Ravi Bishnoi	659	699
7	Josh Hazlewood	654	806
7	Tabraiz Shamsi	654	821
9	Rashid Khan	645	816
10	Reece Topley	643	662

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intel CORE ULTRA

How real estate policies can benefit homebuyers

India has been grappling with a staggering shortage of affordable housing units, underscoring the need for a blueprint that prioritises inclusivity in development initiatives

GETTY IMAGES

Avneesh Sood

The real estate industry in India faces a formidable challenge: providing adequate housing for all citizens amid rapid urbanisation and burgeoning population growth. With over 60 million households lacking access to proper shelter, the need for affordable housing solutions has never been more urgent. Effective real estate policies play a pivotal role in addressing this pressing issue.

By fostering innovation, incentivising private sector participation, and promoting community engagement, these policies hold the key to unlocking solutions that guarantee housing for all segments of society.

Data utilisation

One critical aspect is utilising State-wise housing shortage data. These datapoints reveal the stark disparities in housing availability across different regions, allowing policymakers to prioritise areas in urgent need of intervention. By targeting resources where they are most needed, policymakers can ensure a more equitable distribution of affordable housing solutions.

Moreover, analysing income-wise affordability gaps is instrumental in tailoring policies for various income groups.

Reports from the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) offer valuable insights into income distribution and expenditure patterns, enabling policymakers to design targeted interventions that cater to the specific affordability constraints faced by low, middle, and high-income households.

Assessing the impact of policy initiatives is equally crucial in refining and optimising interventions.Data on sanctioned and completed housing units, sourced from government agencies and industry research publications, provides a quantitative measure of policy effectiveness.

By tracking the progress of housing projects from inception to completion, policymakers can identify bottlenecks and implement corrective measures to ensure timely delivery of housing units.

Microfinance institutions (MFIs) have emerged as a promising avenue for expanding access to housing loans, particularly among low-income earners. Reports from industry associations like the Microfinance Institutions Network (MFIN) highlight the growing role of MFIs in catering to the housing finance needs of underserved communities. By offering flexible repayment options and joint liability group models, MFIs are bridging the gap for individuals who may not qualify for traditional bank loans.

Fintech platforms are also revolutionising the housing finance landscape by streamlining loan application processes and reducing administrative costs.

Data from industry reports, such as those by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), illustrates the increasing adoption of fintech solutions in the Indian financial sector. These platforms leverage alternative data sources and employ innovative algorithms to assess creditworthiness, expanding access to housing finance for a broader segment of the population.

Community involvement is not just a nicety but a necessity in the realm of housing initiatives. Data from various surveys and focus groups highlight the nuanced needs and preferences of different communities, ranging from urban to rural areas. Additionally, Census data provides valuable insights into demographic trends and socio-economic indicators, aiding in the formulation of targeted strategies.

Strategies for fostering community participation abound, from participatory planning workshops to community needs assessments. These initiatives aim to empower residents by providing them with a platform to voice their concerns and aspirations regarding housing. By actively involving communities in decision-making processes, stakeholders can ensure that housing solutions are contextually relevant and sustainable.

Big data analytics offer unparalleled opportunities to optimise various facets of affordable housing development. By leveraging vast datasets and sophisticated analytical tools, stakeholders can gain valuable insights into market trends, demographic dynamics, and socio-economic indicators. This enables informed decision-making and facilitates the design of targeted interventions to meet the diverse housing needs.

The writer is Director, Eros Group.

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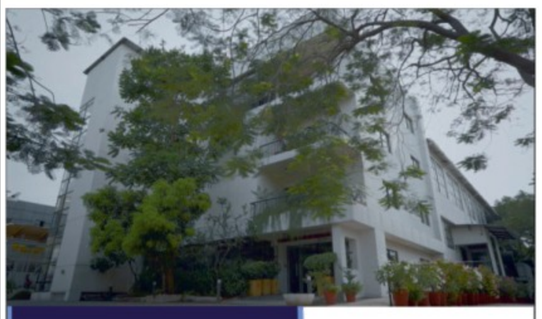

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GETTY IMAGES

Why Michael Olise is attracting the heavy-hitters

The winger has starred in Crystal Palace's recent resurgence, adding goals to his dazzling high-skill game and putting himself in the shop window ahead of the transfer silly season

Reuters
Agence France-Presse

With Europe's top leagues winding down and the summer transfer window set to open in less than a month, football's silly season is truly upon us.

The big clubs – in their bids to enhance, rebuild, rejuvenate, or complete their squads – are looking largely at two categories of players: the bona fide superstar who may be prised away from another heavy-hitter in one fashion or the other; and the potential superstar of tomorrow who has shown signs of breaking out but may still offer good value for money.

Kylian Mbappe is the most prominent example of the first category, with the French sensation announcing that he will leave Paris St. Germain as a free agent after the expiry of his contract. Real Madrid is reportedly preparing to receive Mbappe after the Champions League final.

Michael Olise is fast emerging as one of the more interesting options in the second category. The Crystal Palace winger has starred in the Eagles' resurgence under new manager Oliver Glasner, showing off his dazzling talent and putting himself, front and centre, in the shop window.

Last weekend, Olise delivered another impressive display as Palace registered its fifth win in six Premier League games by beating Wolves 3-1. In the first half, he opened the scoring with a delightful curling strike and played a key role in the buildup to the second scored by Jean-Philippe Mateta. He then assisted Eberechi Eze's second-half goal, which wrapped up victory.

> I just use every opportunity to try and get better every day – if it's a little bit, if it's a lot, whatever the day allows, really. I'm very hungry
>
> **MICHAEL OLISE**

Agent of dominance

Five days before the Wolves performance at Molineux, Olise scored two delightful goals in a 4-0 thrashing of Manchester United at Selhurst Park.

The 22-year-old gave his side the lead after collecting a throw and nimbly sidestepping a Casemiro challenge. With no United player attempting to close him down, he was able to unleash a low shot from just inside the box. Olise's second came from the edge of the box, with his first touch setting up a blistering left-footer that Andre Onana could not deal with.

Olise has now scored 10 goals this Premier League season, the first time he has hit double figures in top-flight football. Add his five assists and that totals up to 15 goal contributions in just 18 appearances (13 starts) during an injury-hit 2023-24!

As per football statistics website FBref.com, Olise, over the last 365 days, is in the top 1% of all footballers across Europe's top leagues for goals scored per 90 minutes. He is also in the top 1% for expected assisted goals. It simply doesn't get much better in terms of end-product.

Olise has played in a different position under Glasner. Typically a touchline-hugging right-winger with the licence to cut in, he has been asked to occupy the half-space infield pockets behind the striker in Glasner's 3-4-2-1. This has brought him closer to goal and allowed him to play off Eze, his left-sided counterpart in the attacking two, and frontman Mateta.

"Everybody knows he's a brilliant player," said Glasner. "He's fit now, I also think we found a very good position for him and he has a lot of individual qualities."

Tricky, creative, intelligent

Olise has always been a very skilful player – a tricky, creative winger who can dribble through crowded areas as well as carry the ball in transition. His agility – like Neymar, a reported inspiration, he shifts both his bodyweight and the ball when dribbling – makes him very difficult to dispossess 1v1. He is also an intelligent passer, with his ability to deliver pinpoint crosses with a low backlift adding significantly to his team's shot-creating potential.

> Everybody knows he's a brilliant player. He's fit now, I also think we found a very good position for him and he has a lot of individual qualities
>
> **OLIVER GLASNER**
> Crystal Palace manager

Now that Olise has beefed up his goal output, it's no surprise he is attracting plenty of suitors. Last August, Chelsea failed in its bid to take Olise to Stamford Bridge. Pochettino's club reportedly offered to pay his then £35 million release clause, but he turned down the chance and penned a new Palace contract just days after. BBC Sport reported that the new contract does not contain a straightforward release clause, but that the Eagles value him at at least £60m.

That price point, given Olise's projected trajectory, is a relative snip for the rich clubs. So it's not surprising that the 22-year-old has been linked with Manchester United, Manchester City, Tottenham Hotspur, Chelsea and Newcastle, with a host of other clubs also reported to be tracking Olise's situation. What makes him such an attractive prospect is that in addition to his undeniable talent he also appears to have the personality to handle the pressures of a big club.

Born in London's Hammersmith district to a Nigerian father and a French-Algerian mother, Olise has a reputation for being something of a maverick. A self-possessed young man who delivers blunt responses in interviews and does not always celebrate goals, the French under-21 international has often chosen the path less trod. As a teenager, he left the youth systems of Chelsea and City to join Reading, where he felt he would have the opportunity to develop.

Olise has also shown the composure to step up in important moments. Last December, he scored a brace in a 3-1 win over Brentford, snapping an eight-game winless run. In the same month, he held his nerve and calmly slotted home a 95th-minute penalty against City to earn a 2-2 draw after being two goals down at one stage. Last January, he produced a brilliant stoppage-time free-kick to rescue a 1-1 draw and end United's run of nine successive wins.

Injury worries

Olise's recent injury history – he missed 135 days in 2022-23 and 60 days in 2023-24 with hamstring injuries – may give some suitors pause, but most of the big clubs have world-class medical expertise and the resources to finance intensive individual attention. Injuries have crippled many a promising career, and it's something Olise is dealing with philosophically.

"I think it's been a bit tough mentally and physically, to keep getting injured," he said. "But also, you know that you can come back from it, so you just try and take the positives, try and stay mentally in a good space. I just use every opportunity to try and get better every day – if it's a little bit, if it's a lot, whatever the day allows, really. I'm very hungry [to improve]."

Palace hopes to hold on to its man, with Glasner saying he wants to build on his excellent start with all of the players at his disposal. But given the amount of interest Olise is drawing, there's a reasonable chance he leaves Selhurst Park. Where he goes, if he does, and what he gets up to should make for compelling viewing.

GAME THEORY

The Kings and Queens of clay

Novak Djokovic and Iga Swiatek joined the list of the most successful singles champions at Roland-Garros with their third titles last year. With the clay Major set to begin next Sunday, we take a look at the most prolific winners at the tournament in its various avatars. From 1891 to 1924, the French Championships were open only to French nationals and French tennis club members. It became an international event in 1925 and moved to Stade Roland Garros in 1928. In 1968, it became the first Grand Slam to open its doors to non-amateur players, as the Open Era took shape.

SOURCE: ROLAND-GARROS

MOST FRENCH SINGLES TITLES (MEN)

Player	Titles	Editions
Rafael Nadal	14	2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022
Max Decugis	8	1903, 1904, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1912, 1913, 1914
Bjorn Borg	6	1974, 1975, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981
Henri Cochet	5	1922, 1926, 1928, 1930, 1932
Andre Vacherot	4	1894, 1895, 1896, 1901
Paul Ayme	4	1897, 1898, 1899, 1900
Maurice Germot	3	1905, 1906, 1910
Rene Lacoste	3	1925, 1927, 1929
Mats Wilander	3	1982, 1985, 1988
Ivan Lendl	3	1984, 1986, 1987
Gustavo Kuerten	3	1997, 2000, 2001
Novak Djokovic	3	2016, 2021, 2023

Rafael Nadal

MOST FRENCH SINGLES TITLES (WOMEN)

Player	Titles	Editions
Chris Evert	7	1974, 1975, 1979, 1980, 1983, 1985, 1986
Suzanne Lenglen	6	1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1925, 1926
Steffi Graf	6	1987, 1988, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1999
Adine Masson	5	1897, 1898, 1899, 1902, 1903
Margaret Court	5	1962, 1964, 1969, 1970, 1973
Kate Gillou	4	1904, 1905, 1906, 1908
Jeanne Matthey	4	1909, 1910, 1911, 1912
Helen Wills	4	1928, 1929, 1930, 1932
Justine Henin	4	2003, 2005, 2006, 2007
Hilde Krahwinkel Sperling	3	1935, 1936, 1937
Arantxa Sanchez Vicario	3	1989, 1994, 1998
Monica Seles	3	1990, 1991, 1992
Serena Williams	3	2002, 2013, 2015
Iga Swiatek	3	2020, 2022, 2023

Chris Evert

PICTURE THIS

GETTY IMAGES

Cold scramble

Short track speed skating is a rapid, unpredictable event notorious for crashes and collisions.

Skaters compete against each other as opposed to against time, which brings skill and strategy into play. Penalties for mishaps are common and often decide the result of the race.

The discipline is contested on an oval rink the same size as that of an ice hockey rink.

Owing to the high speeds and the inevitable collisions — and to the fact that athletes are very close to each other on tight tracks — the walls of the rink are padded for safety.

Short-track skating evolved from speed skating events that were held with mass starts in Canada and North America in the early 1900s. Since these events were held indoors, they were staged on shorter tracks than was usual for outdoor skating.

After being introduced as a demonstration sport at the 1988 Winter Olympics, it was officially included as an event in 1992 and has been on the schedule ever since. More recently, Asian countries such as China and Korea have challenged the North American dominance of the sport.

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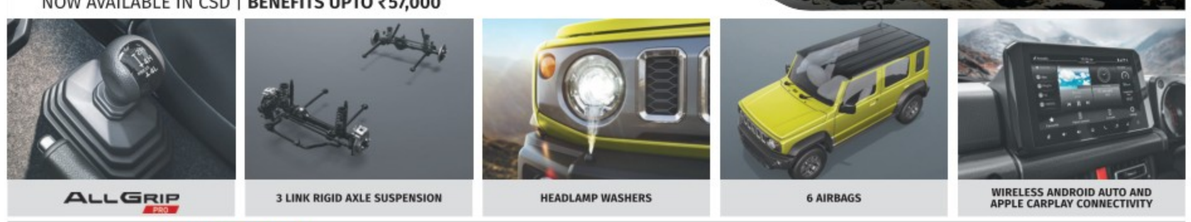

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Three boys drown in a pond near Ramanagara

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Three boys, among a group of eight, died after drowning in a pond on a hillock near Achchalu village on the outskirts of Ramanagara on Friday (May 17). This comes a day after four children drowned in a tank in Alur taluk, Hassan district, on Thursday.

The deceased are Shabaz Khan, 13, Rihan Khan, 16, sons of Sardar Khan, and Syed Shahid, 14, son of Mubeen.

The boys are residents of Phoolbagh Mohalla and neighbours. Police said Shahid was studying in class 6, Shabaz in class 8, and Rihan was promoted to class 10.

They had gone to attend Friday prayers and, along with five others, went to the pond, which is approximately 1.5 km away from their homes.

According to the police, the incident occurred around 3 p.m.

The boys climbed to the hilltop and found the pond filled with water due to recent rains. The area was slippery, and the boys decided to swim without realizing the depth of the water, police said.

While the others were about to stop them, the three jumped into the water and soon started drowning.

The friends shouted and ran towards the main road to get help from a tea stall.

But it was too late. The police, along with Fire and Emergency Services personnel, reached the spot and retrieved the bodies.

Broken pavements pose serious danger to pedestrians in Bengaluru

Open drains and waste dumped on footpaths are common. With no elected councillors, many complaints go unaddressed

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A broken slab on a footpath on Old Kanakapura Road in Bengaluru. BHAGYA PRAKASH K.

A broken footpath next to an open drain near BEML 5th stage bus stand in Bengaluru. K. MURALI KUMAR

Nearly two months ago, a 19-year-old student returning to his paying guest accommodation late at night unwittingly stepped on an uneven surface on a footpath in S.G. Palya, Tavarekere, resulting in a toe injury. "In S.G. Palya, slabs that cover the roadside drain are broken in many places and footpaths are cracked. Anybody can fall anytime," said Neeraj K.

Residents in many other areas also face similar problems. Open drains and waste dumped on footpaths are common. With no elected councillors, many complaints go unaddressed, Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) complain.

In Kengeri, a stretch between Dodbele and Kengeri metro stations is plagued with problems. Arun, a teacher, said although there are schools in the vicinity and children use footpaths to commute, authorities have turned a blind eye. The slabs are broken, and children can fall into the drains. A shopkeeper said the problem hasn't been addressed for many years.

The footpaths between Baiyappanahalli metro station and RMZ Infinity are in a bad state. Concrete tiles are broken, slabs are not in their proper place, and drains are not covered in many areas. The paths are uneven, and pedestrians risk losing balance and falling. Near the Baiyappanahalli police station, an open drain runs alongside the footpath, posing a danger.

Kiran Kumar S., a social activist, has been trying to draw the BBMP's attention. "I have filed many complaints and posted about the problem on X. I have received acknowledgements from BBMP. But the civic body has failed to take action," he said.

The residents of Sanjeevani Vaibhav Apartments at Ambedkar Nagar in Whitefield are inconvenienced as the BBMP dug up the pavement in front of the complex about two months ago for drain work. The work was halted immediately after digging.

Secretary of the apartment Deepak Jaiswal said, "After I tweeted about power failure following flooding due to unfinished drain work, Bescom and BBMP are attending to the problem. As schools will restart in the coming week, this poses a threat to the children boarding school buses." A senior BBMP official said the civic body addresses the issue as and when it receives complaints about footpaths.

(With inputs from Adithi A., Ayran Bhatt, Debasmita Chowdhury and Aasaavari Mohana Gobbur)

Fan rush

A crowd of cricket fans outside the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Friday for a glimpse of cricketers on the eve of the crucial IPL match between Royal Challengers Bangalore and Chennai Super Kings. K. MURALI KUMAR (RELATED REPORT ON PAGE 17)

Boy found murdered on city outskirts

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 12-year-old boy who had come to visit his parents on summer vacation from Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh was found murdered in a eucalyptus groove near the labour shed where his parents were living in Sarjapura police station limits on Wednesday evening.

The deceased Pranesh, second son of Basavaraju, who works as a construction labourer along with his wife and elder son Shivakumar at Manjunath layout in Neriga village labour shed for a year now.

Basavaraju had left Pranesh at his relative's house in Kurnool where he was studying in class 7.

Pranesh had come to visit his parents a fortnight ago. He used to stay at the shed while the family went to work.

On Wednesday the family went to work leaving behind Pranesh.

Found dead

The murder came to light when the family returned home and the elder brother ventured into the eucalyptus groove to relieve himself and came back running shouting that Pranesh was dead.

Shocked family went to the spot and found Pranesh was dead and bleeding from his head and ears.

Shiva Kumar told his parents that he had seen Pranesh at home when he had come to have lunch.

Pranesh had gone to the backyard to relieve himself and Shivakumar came back to work.

Further investigation

Based on the complaint, the police have registered a case of murder and are questioning Shivakumar the elder brother who had seen Pranesh for the last time for further investigation.

KSOU, music varsity join hands to support mutually

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

The Karnataka State Open University (KSOU), Mysuru, and the Karnataka State Dr. Gangubai Hangal Music and Performing Arts University (KSGM PAU), Mysuru have come together to foster the development of academic programmes and facilitate the exchange of faculty and students. The collaboration aims to optimise the mutual use of infrastructure facilities and organise workshops, seminars, and conferences for academic excellence.

Also, the KSOU aims to integrate diverse disciplines and promote holistic education.

KSOU Vice-Chancellor Sharanappa V. Halse and Music University Vice-Chancellor Nagesh V. Bettakote on Friday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in this connection and both expressed confidence that the collaboration would promote enhancement of knowledge and skill development among the students.

Addressing a press conference after signing the MoU, Prof. Halse said the regional centres of KSOU spread across the State can be used for running the programmes of the music university besides conducting exams and other academic activities.

"We have the infrastructure in districts and taluks and the music university can use it for promoting and running its courses, thereby reaching the unreached."

Prof. Bettakote said the government has asked the State universities to share their infrastructure and facilities for academic activities.

"As we have been given the responsibility of conducting the State-wide dance and music examinations, we thought of making use of the facilities of KSOU and also for running certificate and PG diploma courses," he said.

Officials from the KSOU and Music University were present on the occasion.

Corruption while clearing bills in BBMP has increased: Contractors

Shreyas H.S.
BENGALURU

At a recent meeting, the contractors appealed to the civic body to 'reduce the number of tables through which files move before clearing bills'. FILE PHOTO

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Contractors' Association has alleged that corruption in clearing bills in the civic body had shot up despite a probe into similar allegations of corruption under the previous regime being underway.

At a recent meeting between the civic body and contractors, the contractors appealed to the civic body to "reduce the number of tables through which files move before clearing bills".

K.T. Manjunath, president of the BBMP Contractors' Association, said that in the present system, the files have to move through at least 40 tables before a bill is cleared.

He said they informed the Finance Department, BBMP, about the increase in the number of tables, which has become a cause for harassment by officials and how these tables have paved the way for corruption. The files are also not moving smoothly from table to table.

Mr. Manjunath further said the contractors asked the Finance Department to find a solution to cut down tables and simplify the payment process.

"We have also objected to BBMP bringing back randomisation and Technical Vigilance Cell under the Commissioner (TVCC), which has come as another hurdle in clearing the bills. The finance department assured the contractors of discussing the issue of tables and randomisation with the Chief Commissioner," he said.

Under randomisation, the files that are up for clearing bills are chosen randomly, and later, the TVCC will inspect the work to check for quality. However, the contractors allege that the files are selected in a way that facilitates corruption, and this should stop.

The BBMP contends that the randomisation system is very transparent, as the files are chosen by the software and not manually.

BBMP Special Commissioner (Finance) Shivananda Kalakere said the department is aware of the contractors' complaints and problems.

When asked about the demand to reduce the number of tables a file has to pass through before a bill is cleared, he said most of these were checks that are supposed to be carried out by the engineering department on the quality of works.

"We are looking into this process in a meticulous manner and will soon submit a report to the Chief Commissioner."

Mr. Kalakere said the contractors had also expressed concerns about randomisation and the TVCC system.

"This system has been in practice for a very long time, but it was halted after multiple Special Investigation Teams were formed. After the government dissolved SITs and Justice Nagamohan Das Commission informed the BBMP that it could probe allegations of irregularities and corruption within the stipulated deadline, the system was brought back. The BBMP may reconsider dropping randomisation if the government extends the tenure of the Nagamohan Das Commission," he said.

Maintenance arrears: HC orders creating a charge on immovable property of husband

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has directed the Stamps and Registration Department to create a charge on the immovable properties of a 70-year-old man to recover arrears of maintenance awarded by the courts to his wife and a disabled son for several years.

A division bench comprising Justice Anu Sivaraman and Justice Anant Ramanath Hegde issued the direction while allowing an appeal filed by the wife and the disabled children seeking higher maintenance as the Family Court had marginally increased it.

The wife and the disabled children also complained about arrears due to the husband's non-payment of maintenance regularly.

What Act says

Pointing out that Section 39 of the Transfer of Property Act, 1882, enables the arrears of maintenance can be a charge on the property, the Bench directed jurisdictional sub-registrar of the Stamps and Registration Department to make an entry in the encumbrance certificate of the husband's property situated at Uttarahalli in Bengaluru South.

Also, the Bench directed the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) to make necessary entries in the property documents for the creation of a charge.

The bench said that if the wife provides details of her husband's other immovable properties besides the one at Uttarahalli, both authorities will have to create charges and necessary entries in the records of those properties as well.

Enhanced amount

Meanwhile, the Bench enhanced maintenance amount to ₹5,000 per month each for the wife and the disabled son from the meagre ₹2,000 each per month awarded way back in 2002, when the wife had initially filed suit for maintenance after leaving the matrimonial home following cruelty by the husband. The Bench noted that the son, though a major now, is not capable of earning due to his disability.

In 2018, the Family Court enhanced the maintenance amount to ₹3,000 per month as against her plea of ₹5,000 per month each.

Police open fire at rowdy sheeter

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Doddaballapura rural police shot at a 35-year-old rowdy sheeter after he allegedly attacked a constable while trying to evade arrest on Friday.

The accused Srinivasa alias Mitte, was involved in a brutal murder of his 27-year-old rival identified as Hemanth Kumar Gowda, 27, and took his body in a car around the area to send message to his rival gang on May 11 and was on the run since then.

The police had registered a complaint and tracked down Srinivasa who was hiding at his village in Sriramanahalli near Yelahanka.

Escape bid

A special team led by Inspector Sadiq Pasha reached the village to secure his arrest, but the accused in a bid to escape allegedly attacked Chandrashekar.

In self-defense, Sadiq Pasha warned Srinivasa to surrender and later opened fire to stop him from fleeing, the police claimed.

The accused along with the injured constable was rushed to hospital for treatment. The police have registered a case against the accused for further investigations.

E-TENDER NOTICE SAI

Sports Authority of India, NSSC, Bangalore invites e-tender for following works: -

1. **SAI/NSSC/ENGG/NIT-02/2024-25** for Painting of Internal/ External sides of walls in Elite Women's Hostel including Minor Repair works of Plumbing and Tiling at SAI NSSC, Bangalore.. For more details please visit E-Tender website **http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app, https://sportsauthorityofindia.nic.in & http://www.saisouth-bangalore.com.**

The Last date of Submission of E-Tender is 05.06.2024 up to 16.00 hrs.

Sd/- Deputy Director-Infra

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, KUSUMKANTI Shukla, D/O. Anant Kishor Shukla, R/O. B–105, Brigade Metropolis, Garudachar Palya, Mahadevapura. Blr–48, have changed my name to Kusum Shukla vide affdvt dtd 7/5/2024

I, JOSHUA, S/o Late. Peddaiah, R/a No.135, Krishnappa Lane, Cox Town, Jeevanahalli, Bangalore-560005 have changed my name to S.Nagaraj vide affidavit dt: 16.04.2024 sworn before Notary C.Santhosh, B'lore

I, NIKHIL Chander Pandey, S/o Jagdish Chander Pandey, R/a No.202, 2nd Cross, Kousar Nagar, Sultanpalya, R T Nagar, Bangalore-560032 have changed my name to Syed Nihal vide affidavit dt: 17.05.2024 sworn before Notary Meer Hassan. B'lore

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE HON'BLE I PRINCIPAL FAMILY COURT JUDGE: KALPATHARU COURT : AT : HYDERABAD. F.C.O.P.No. 483 of 2023

Between:
K.J. Suhasini, W/o. Poul Daniel
...Petitioner
and
Poul Daniel S/o. Jrmiyah Poul
...Respondent

To,
Poul Daniel S/o. Jrmiyah Poul, #502, Shriram Surabni Apartment, Holiday Village Road, Thalaghattapura, Bengaluru, Thalaghattapura, Karnataka-560109.

Please take notice that the above named petitioner has filed the above said O.P. against you for Divorce and the said case is posted to 30.05.2024 for your appearance. Hence you are hereby requested to appear before the above said court on 30.05.2024 at 10.30 a.m. either in person or through an advocate, otherwise, the matter will be decided in your absence.

//By Order of the Court//
Sd/- P.R. Shanthi,
Advocates,
BHEL Lake View App., KC Puram, Hyderabad. Ph: 9000111892.

BEFORE THE HON'BLE PRINCIPAL FAMILY COURT AT CHENNAI H.M.O.P.No. 2475 of 2023

WSR. SARAVANAN ... Petitioner
-Vs-
S. Sindhu W/o. WSR. Saravanan ...Respondent

To
S. Sindhu W/o. WSR. Saravanan No.13, Alanghat House, 1st A Cross, 2nd Stage, AGB Layout, Mahalakshmipuram, Bengaluru 560 086.

Please take notice that I had filed the above referred Hindu Marriage Original Petition for Restitution of my conjugal rights against the Respondent/Wife herein, hence on 15.05.2024, the HON'BLE PRINCIPAL FAMILY COURT AT CHENNAI her Honor was ordered Substituted Service vide Paper Publication to you in any of your local English Newspaper.

Thus, Kindly appear in person before the HON'BLE PRINCIPAL FAMILY COURT AT CHENNAI on 21.06.2024 at Morning 10:00 AM without fail, failing which the HMOP will be decided in your absence.

WSR. SARAVANAN
(Party in Person)

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, JAGANNATHA Kamath, S/o Kustappa Kamath, R/a No.154, Mathru Kripa, 2nd Cross, Central Excise Layout, Near Bhoopasandra, R.M.V Extension 2nd Stage, Bengaluru-560094, hereby state that my name has been wrongly mentioned as Jagannath Kushtappa Kamath in my PAN card and Jagannatha Kustappa Kamath in my Passport but my correct name is Jagannatha Kamath, vide affidavit dt: 17.05.2024 sworn before Notary K.Mallikarjuna, B'luru.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-1, B.S.N.L. BUILDING, 4TH FLOOR, TELEPHONE HOUSE, RAJBHAVAN ROAD, BENGALURU-560 001
O.A. NO. 753/2023
BETWEEN :
ICICI BANK LIMITED,
...APPLICANT
AND :
PAMA FARMS & OTHERS
...DEFENDANTS

To,
1. PAMA FARMS, REPRESENTED BY ITS PARTNERS, SURVEY NO.178, B12, SEEKAYANAHALLI VILLAGE, VISWANATHAPURA, DEVANAHALLI TALUK, BANGALORE- 560 110
2. MR. RAJEEV SAMUEL, S/O. MR. GILBERT SUNDERAJ SAMUEL, AGED ABOUT 60 YEARS, NO. 3, 1ST CROSS, 3RD C STREET, RAMAIAH GARDEN, SIR M V NAGAR,, RAMAMURTHY NAGAR, BANGLAORE- 560 016
3. MRS. RAJINI SAMUEL, W/O. MR. RAJEEV SAMUEL, AGED ABOUT 46 YEARS, NO. 3, 1ST CROSS, 3RD C STREET, RAMAIAH GARDEN, SIR M V NAGAR, RAMAMURTHY NAGAR, BANGLAORE- 560 016

SUMMONS ISSUED TO DEFENDANTS UNDER RULE 23(Viii) OF DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES OF 1993 BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION

WHEREAS the applicant has instituted an application under section 19 of Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions, Act, 1993, against the above defendants for the recovery of sum of **Rs.24,16,909/- (Rupees Twenty Four Lakhs Sixteen Thousand Nine Hundred and Nine Rupees only)** amount together with current and future interest, cost and other reliefs.

The above mentioned defendants are required to appear therefore hereby directed to appear before the Tribunal in person or through an Advocate or duly instructed in support of their defence to show cause on **20/08/2024** at **10:30 a.m.** as why the relief's prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in case default the application will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this day **02/05/2024**

BY THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL
REGISTRAR-1
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-1 BANGALORE

Class 10 annual exam-2, remedial classes postponed

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Amidst a lukewarm response from both students and teachers to the remedial classes for students who failed the class 10 exam, the State government has postponed the SSLC annual exam-2. It will now begin on June 14. Earlier, it was scheduled to start on June 7.

The Department of School Education and Literacy (DSEL) issued an order on May 13 to organise remedial classes at all government high schools for students who failed and scored very low marks between May 15 and June 5. The government also arranged mid-day meals for them.

However, the order came at very short notice, and many teachers opposed it. Legislators representing teachers in the Legislative Council also wrote to the Department, appealing to them to relax the order.

Following this, the DSEL postponed the schedule of remedial classes. They will now begin on May 29 and end on June 13, even as annual exam - 2 will commence on June 14.

Among 8,25,468 students who appeared for the class 10 annual exam-1, 6,08,336 students passed, and 2,17,132 students failed.

The number of C+ (50-59%) and C (35-49%) grade students has increased compared to the previous year. This year, the percentage of C+ and C grade students has increased by 22.38% and 23.66%, respectively. Special classes are to be held for these students ahead of Annual Exam - 2.

Drop in temperature as Bengaluru gets light rainfall

The IMD forecast for the next 24 hours states that the city will get light to moderate rainfall and thundershowers towards the evening and night

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Residents of Bengaluru woke up to a rainy morning on Friday (May 17) as several parts of the city had received light rains. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Bengaluru, the city recorded 17.0 mm rainfall from 5.45 a.m. to 6.30 a.m.

The early morning rains made most of Friday cool and overcast. The temperature also dipped, and for the first time since the onset of the summer, the maximum recorded temperature was below 30°C.

Bengaluru has been reeling under scorching heat, having received no rains in the month of April. The temperature reached a maximum of 38.5°C.

Bengaluru recorded a maximum temperature of 29.2 °C and a minimum temperature of 22.1 °C on Friday. FILE PHOTO

According to IMD observation data, Bengaluru recorded a maximum temperature of 29.2 °C and a minimum temperature of 22.1 °C on Friday, and the HAL airport station recorded a maximum of 28.8 °C and a minimum of 21.6 °C.

The average maximum temperature for Bengaluru and HAL Airport in May is 33.3 °C and 33.1 °C, respectively. But on Friday, there was a departure of -4.1 °C and -4.4 °C from the normal temperature at the two stations.

Though some parts of the city received light rainfall during the day, the city station did not record any rainfall, the HAL airport station recorded trace rainfall, and the Kempegowda International Airport station recorded 0.4 mm rainfall.

The IMD forecast for the next 24 hours states that the city would have light to moderate rainfall and thundershowers towards the evening and night. "Generally cloudy sky. Light to moderate rain and thundershowers are very likely toward evening and night in some areas. Maximum and minimum temperatures are very likely to be around 31°C and 22°C, respectively," states the forecast.

The Met Department has also forecast moderate rain and thundershowers associated with gusty winds (40-50 kmph) for the Bengaluru Urban district next week except on May 19, for which it has forecast heavy rain and thundershowers.

From Page One

Bodies exhumed to 'please rain god'

"The areca growers of our village spent altogether about ₹1 crore to somehow safeguard their plantations in the last three months. We prayed to all deities and finally did the rituals to please the rain god. As the last option, they did this custom as suggested by the elders of the village," said a woman at Jaladihalli.

It is said that the villagers conducted the ritual in a discreet manner. Nobody was allowed to take photos or videos of the ritual. When *The Hindu* spoke to Chikkamagaluru DC Meena Nagaraj, the officer said she was not aware of such incidents. "For the first time, I am hearing about such customs. We will verify if such things happened," she said.

Offence under law

As per the law, exhuming bodies is an offense. "Only in the case of suspicious death can the bodies be exhumed for further examination, and only after following a strict legal process. However, those who engage in such practices and the people who provoke innocent people to indulge in such acts should be punished," said K.P. Sripal, an advocate in Shivamogga.

Areca is the main plantation crop in parts of Chikkamagaluru and Shivamogga districts. The growers earn a minimum of ₹4 lakh per acre, given the prevailing price in the market. With failed rains, many have hired tankers to carry water from private borewells.

Retired BESCOM engineer posing as policeman arrested

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A constable on duty attached to the Peenya police caught a retired BESCOM engineer, who was posing as a Police Inspector moving around in vehicle with police sticker, and carrying a walkie-talkie to cheat people.

Based on a tip off, constable Sanjeev Maruthi, confronted the accused identified as Gangadhar, on Tuesday, and found that the mobile number he was using also was identified by Truecaller as Police Inspector of Peenya Police Station.

An initial probe revealed that the accused posing as a police Inspector is suspected to have cheated many people by promising them official favours after taking money. He was using a fake Police ID to cheat people and damaging the reputation of the Police Department.

Handed over to CCB

Considering the sensitivity of the the case, it was handed over to the Central Crime Branch for a detailed probe, a police officer said.

Advocate Devaraje Gowda makes fresh charges against Shivakumar

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Advocate Devaraje Gowda, who earlier claimed he had the explicit content allegedly of Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna that was leaked on April 22, has now been arrested in the video leak case. He was remanded in the custody of the Special Investigation Team (SIT), probing the case, for a day by the JMFC court in Hassan on Friday.

The SIT will likely seek extension of his custody in Bengaluru on Saturday when his police custody ends.

'Committee of four ministers'

While being taken away from the court premises in Hassan, Devaraje Gowda made fresh allegations against Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar in the video leak case.

He alleged that Mr. Shivakumar had formed "a committee of four Ministers" including N. Cheluvaraya Swamy, Krishna Byre Gowda and Priyank Kharge to handle the "Prajwal Revanna case"

Devraje Gowda speaking to mediapersons from a police van. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

to "embarrass Prime Minister Modi." He also claimed that Mr. Shivakumar had made him an offer of ₹100 crore and had sent him an "advance" of ₹5 crore for the videos.

Former Chief Minister and JD(S) State president H.D. Kumaraswamy posted a video of the advocate making these allegations on social media and called Mr. Shivakumar "CD Shivakumar." Mr. Shivakumar had earlier rubbished allegations made by Devaraje Gowda.

Devaraje Gowda was recently arrested in connection with a case of sex abuse and under Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, registered against him on April 1.

Devaraje Gowda had reportedly written a letter to BJP State president B.Y. Vijayendra in December, 2023, claiming he had a copy of explicit content allegedly involving Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna with 2,976 files.

Meanwhile, H.D. Revanna's anticipatory bail plea in a sexual harassment case registered against him on April 28, was adjourned to Monday in the Special Court for Elected Representatives.

The court extended his interim anticipatory bail till Monday.

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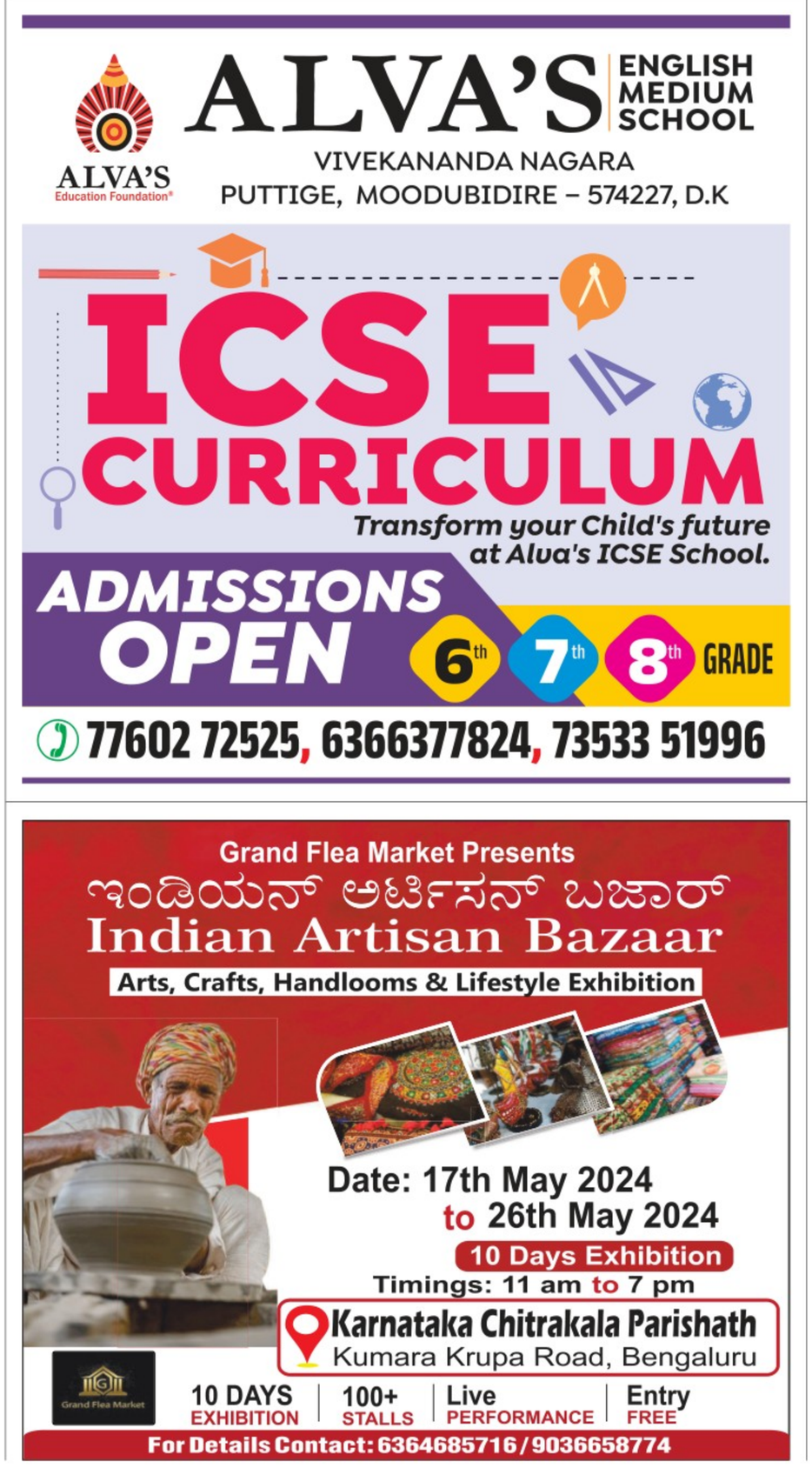

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Timings
BENGALURU

SATURDAY, MAY. 18	
RISE 05:54	SET 18:39
RISE 14:32	SET 02:17
SUNDAY, MAY. 19	
RISE 05:54	SET 18:39
RISE 15:17	SET 02:51
MONDAY, MAY. 20	
RISE 05:53	SET 18:39
RISE 16:03	SET 03:25

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	34	26
Mysuru	33	24
Bengaluru	31	23

Bengaluru Today
33°C Morning will be pleasant Day will be warm and humid. Chances of moderate rain and thundershower with gusty winds. A comfortable night.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
34°C Weather will be slight warm and humid. Night will comfortable. Spell of moderate to heavy rain and thundershower to occur.

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THE HINDU
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Yet another female foeticide racket unearthed in Mandya

A group 'D' employee and ambulance driver of Pandavapura government hospital were caught in the staff quarters

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The State government, in the first week of January, constituted a task force for PCPNDT Act implementation under the chairmanship of the Health and Family Welfare Commissioner. FILE PHOTO

Despite a crackdown on illegal abortions in Karnataka over the past few months, female foeticide is going on unabated. A recent police case booked in Mandya district, where a group 'D' employee and an ambulance driver of a State-run hospital were involved, is testimony to this. Shockingly, the racket was being run in the department's staff quarters in Pandavapura.

While the Health Department has filed an FIR and dismissed the two staffers, who were hired on contract, the Mandya police are on a massive manhunt for the people who are part of the illegal abortion racket run by government staffers.

Police conduct raid

In an incident that has belatedly come to light, based on a tip-off, a team of police along with Health Department officials on May 5 raided the residential quarters of group 'D' employee Ashwini R., 32, working as assistant in the labour ward in Pandavapura government sub-divisional hospital. The police found a woman, who was in the fourth month of pregnancy, in Ashwini's residence. Ashwini, apparently, gave the woman (identified as Pushpalatha) five tablets used for medical termination of pregnancy. The woman had developed a stomach ache and was bleeding profusely when the raid was conducted, according to the FIR.

The woman, said to be from Mysuru, was shifted to the Pandavapura government sub-divisional hospital, but the foetus could not be saved. Based on the doctor's advice, medical termination was carried out to save the woman from excessive bleeding.

The police sealed the residence of Ashwini and her husband, Anand M., working as ambulance driver in the same hospital. Sathyamma, 54, mother of Ashwini, and Girijamba, 48, relative of Ashwini who were helping her in the illegal abortions, have also been arrested.

The medical equipment and surgical instruments found at Ashwini's residence have been seized and she has been taken for further investigation. The police have arrested the patient's husband Shivalinga Nayaka for allegedly forcing the illegal abortion along with nine others, who are part of the racket. The accused have been booked under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act and Karnataka Private Medical Establishment Act.

In December, the Bengaluru police unearthed a prenatal sex determination racket across Bengaluru, Mandya, and Mysuru districts. They arrested a doctor and his lab technician who allegedly performed around 900 illegal abortions in the last three years.

Following this, the State government had, in the first week of January, constituted a task force for PCPNDT Act implementation under the chairmanship of the Health and Family Welfare Commissioner. This followed Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao's announcement on December 12, 2023, in the Legislative Council during the Belagavi session that the government will set up task forces at the State and district levels within a week to curb female foeticide. However, it had been delayed following surge in COVID-19 cases and shift of focus.

State's proposal to enhance penal clauses under PCPNDT Act awaits Centre's nod

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

The State Health Department's proposal to enhance penal clauses under the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994, remains on paper as the Centre is yet to take a call on it.

Following the unearthing of a prenatal sex determination racket across Bengaluru, Mandya, and Mysuru districts in December, 2023, the State PCPNDT Supervisory Board had in January recommended enhancing the penal clauses under the Act from three years imprisonment and ₹10,000 fine to five years and ₹5 lakh and making the offence non-bailable. However, as PCPNDT is a Central Act, the State Health Department cannot act on the proposed recommendations unless the Centre amends the Act.

"We had written to the Centre in January this year and are awaiting to hear on this front. As PCPNDT is a Central Act, States do not have the authority to amend the Act locally. The Centre has to discuss the proposal and take a call on it," Vivek Dorai, State Deputy Director (Medical Acts) told *The Hindu* on Friday. The State PCPNDT Supervisory Board had also written to the Home Department to depute an officer of the cadre of Deputy SP or Assistant Commissioner of Police to the State PCPNDT Task Force set up to curb female foeticide on the lines of a similar system being followed in Tamil Nadu. However, this is also under discussion, the official said.

Nearly 25 cases booked

Dr. Dorai said following the CID probe into the illegal sex determination racket in March, nearly 25 female foeticide cases have been booked across the State. Overall, the State has booked only 125 violation cases of PCPNDT (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994, since 2002, he said.

"One of those arrested by the CID in the previous racket has come out on bail and is now again involved in this month's new racket unearthed in Mandya. The CID is now considering approaching the court to get his bail cancelled," Dr. Dorai said.

Stringent law

Expressing concern over the increasing number of female foeticide cases in the State, Vasundhara Bhupathi, former member of the State Advisory Committee, said the penalty and bail amount is too low as of now. "The violators know that they can easily pay the penalty and walk out. A stringent law with a hefty penalty and longer imprisonment should be put in place," she said. Besides, there should be increased awareness and effective implementation of the ban on mobile scanning machines, she added.

Council polls: BJP candidate to withdraw and extend support to JD(S) nominee

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

BJP nominee E.C. Ningaraju (third from left) announced his support to JD(S) candidate K. Vivekanada at a press conference in Mysuru on Friday. M.A. SRIRAM

The BJP nominee for the elections to the Legislative Council from South Teachers' constituency, E.C. Ningaraju, announced his support to JD(S) candidate K. Vivekananda on Friday in a bid to end the confusion that had arisen over the alliance's candidate in the constituency.

Mr. Ningaraju, who had already filed his nomination papers for the elections, had been convinced by the BJP leadership to withdraw from the contest in favour of the JD(S) candidate.

At a press conference attended by leaders of both BJP and JD(S) leaders in Mysuru on Friday, Mr. Ningaraju said he was extending support to Mr. Vivekananda to honour the BJP's alliance with JD(S) and strengthen party's State president B.Y. Vijayendra's hands.

BJP leaders, including Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R. Ashok, who was present when Mr. Vivekananda filed his nomination papers on Thursday, said Mr. Ningaraju will withdraw from the electoral race as Mr. Vivekananda was the joint candidate of the BJP and JD (S) alliance. The last date for withdrawal of candidature for the elections is May 20.

What caused confusion

The BJP's central election committee had announced Mr. Ningaraju as the candidate for the constituency on May 11. But, the party as part of the seat-sharing arrangement later conceded the seat to JD (S), which has fielded Mr. Vivekananda. After Mr. Ashok spoke to Mr. Ningaraju on Thursday, Mr. Vijayendra had contacted him on Friday and convinced him to withdraw from the fray.

JD (S) leader G.T. Deve Gowda, who was also present on the occasion, said Mr. Ningaraju's decision to extend support to Mr. Vivekananda showed that the alliance between BJP and JD (S) was not only strong, but will also continue in future.

To a question on the reason for the confusion, Mr. Gowda said a decision had been taken at a co-ordination committee meeting of the two parties earlier that two out of the six Legislative Council constituencies going to polls will be left for the JD (S).

How it was sorted out

The constituencies allocated to the JD (S) included South West Teachers' and South Teachers' that were held by the party. As Marithibbe Gowda, who had won as JD (S) candidate from South Teachers' constituency had quit the party and joined the Congress, and the JD (S) had not chosen its candidate yet, but the BJP leadership had allocated the constituency to its candidate. Later, JD (S) State president H.D. Kumaraswamy spoke to the BJP leadership and convinced them to cede the seat, he said.

To a question on the disappointment among former MLC K.T. Srikante Gowda and his supporters over the denial of ticket to him, Mr. Deve Gowda said the former MLC will himself lead the campaign for Mr. Vivekananda. He said the party had chosen Mr. Vivekananda over Mr. Srikante Gowda as the latter had already served as an MLC.

Siddaramaiah asks officials to ensure timely supply of farm inputs in kharif season

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

As several districts across the State have been receiving rains for the last few days, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday took stock of preparations made by officials to supply agricultural inputs to farmers during the kharif season and precautionary measures taken in the wake of heavy rainfall.

Chief Secretary Rajneesh Goyal, and senior officials of Agriculture and Finance departments informed the Chief Minister on the preparations made to distribute farm inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and subsidies under various schemes to farmers.

The Chief Minister instructed the officials to ensure that there is no shortage of sowing seeds and fertilizers for the kharif sowing season. He reviewed the implementation of budget programmes in the agriculture sector.

No artificial scarcity

Mr. Siddaramaiah reportedly told officials to monitor the supply and stocks and take all precautionary measures against creation of artificial scarcity. He told officials to be ready with precautionary measures to be implemented during rain havoc. The officials have also been instructed to expedite the process of obtaining no-objection certificates (NoCs) from the Centre on pending infrastructure projects, including irrigation.

There was no official briefing about the meeting on account of the election model code of conduct.

Demand and supply

The officials reportedly briefed Mr. Siddaramaiah that steps have been taken at the district level to supply seeds to farmers. As per the estimates, about 53,500 quintals of seeds have been made available in districts. The State has a stock of 15 lakh tonnes of fertilizers against the requirement of about 26 lakh tonnes of nutrients, sources said.

The officials provided information to Mr. Siddaramaiah about steps taken to distribute drought relief to farmers who had lost crops in the kharif season of 2023. The relief has been provided to close to 20 lakh families of farmers.

Several Ministers have called on the Chief Minister in the last few days and urged him to expedite the process of providing compensation to farmers impacted by drought. The State had declared 223 taluks drought-hit last year.

Banks told not to adjust drought relief amount for loans

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has directed Chief Secretary Rajneesh Goyal to write to nationalised banks asking them not to deduct or adjust the amount credited to accounts of farmers under the drought relief or MGNREGA wages for loan instalments.

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- Reach the venue 3 hours before the start of the game to avoid rush.
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- Co-operate with police / security personnel for searching / frisking.
- Entry only for persons with valid tickets / Accreditation.
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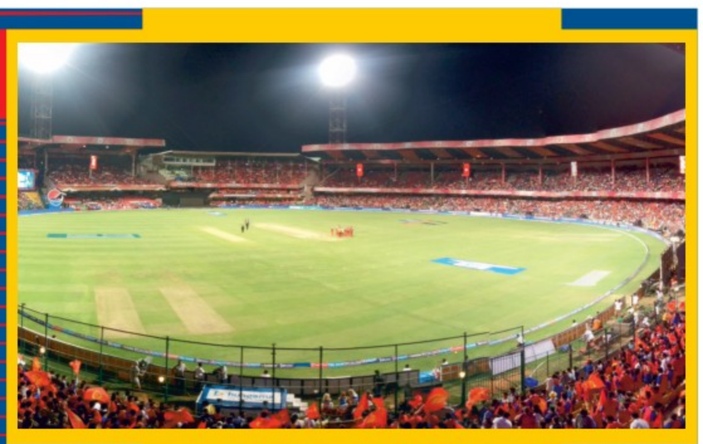

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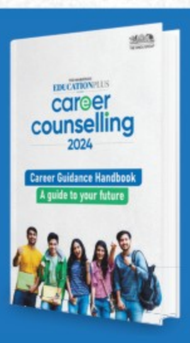

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M BG-BGE

INBRIEF

Court stays proceedings in *Manjummel Boys* dispute

The Kerala High Court on Friday stayed for a month the proceedings in a cheating and forgery case against actor-cum-producer Soubin Shahir, producer Shawn Antony and Soubin's father, Babu Shahir, in connection with a dispute over the hit Malayalam film, *Manjummel Boys*. The case was registered after a complainant claimed that he invested money in the production of the film, but was not paid any profits. The stay order came on a petition filed by Babu Shahir.

RMP leader K.S. Hariharan arrested for sexist remark

The police on Friday arrested Revolutionary Marxist Party (RMP) leader K.S. Hariharan in connection with the alleged sexist remarks he made about Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader K.K. Shailaja and actor Manju Warrier. The action was taken based on a complaint filed by the All India Democratic Women's Association. It was during a recent public speech that Mr. Hariharan made the remarks. He later apologised for them. The case was registered at the Vadakara police station under Sections 509 (punishment for insulting the modesty of woman) and 153 (punishment for wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot) of the IPC.

Solar scam returns to haunt LDF, UDF coalitions in Kerala

Controversy over which alliance blinked first in the political stalemate over the demand for Oommen Chandy's resignation as CM in 2013

G. Anand
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

V.S. Achuthanandan leading the protest in 2013 demanding resignation of the then-Kerala CM Oommen Chandy. FILE PHOTO

The solar scam that rattled the Oommen Chandy government in 2013 and continued to make waves for years resurfaced on Friday to bedevil Kerala's ruling front and the Opposition alike.

A retired journalist salvaged the controversy from political oblivion by suggesting in an article that the Left Democratic Front's mammoth siege of the government Secretariat in August 2013 demanding Chandy's resignation was a political charade.

The journalist, John Mundakayam, claimed that political deal-making and behind-the-scenes manoeuvring preceded the protest, which saw Communist Party of India (Marxist) workers, with little access to basic facilities, squatting on the road and sleeping rough around the Secretariat for nearly a day.

The LDF called off the "indefinite siege" and dropped its demand for Chandy's resignation after the Congress-led United Democratic Front government agreed to institute a judicial inquiry into the scam and bring the Chief Minister's Office under the probe's ambit.

'Met halfway'

Leading political players privy to the 2013 events conceded on Friday that both sides had met halfway to break the deadlock. However, they vehemently disagreed on which side blinked first.

According to the then-Home Minister Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan, Cherian Philip, then with the LDF, and CPI(M) leader John Brittas, MP, set the negotiations in motion at the LDF's instance. He said the LDF yielded ground by dropping its demand for Chandy's resignation.

At a press conference in Kannur, Mr. Brittas claimed that Mr. Radhakrishnan had initiated the negotiations. He said the UDF had no recourse but to agree to a judicial probe covering the Chief Minister's Office.

Mr. Philip, now back with the Congress, said CPI (M) leaders were sceptical about indefinitely besieging the Secretariat but had bowed to the then-Leader of the Opposition V.S. Achuthanandan's pressure.

Mr. Philip said Mr. Radhakrishnan was eager to stave off the LDF's demand for Chandy's resignation and avoid a law-and-order situation under his watch.

Kerala braces for another season of infectious diseases

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala is bracing for yet another season when infectious diseases are expected to peak and any slackening in adoption of precautions can lead to loss of lives, according to Health Minister Veena George.

In a statement here on Friday following a high-level meeting of Health Department officials, Ms. George said all departments had to undertake measures for the upcoming monsoon season in a coordinated manner as the intense heatwave and the summer showers that followed could possibly lead to an unusual spike in all infectious diseases in the next few months.

The Minister said secondary infections were being reported in many who contracted hepatitis A, which could turn dangerous. Those who are affected by hepatitis should necessarily take rest for six weeks and follow the health advisory issued by public health officials, she said.

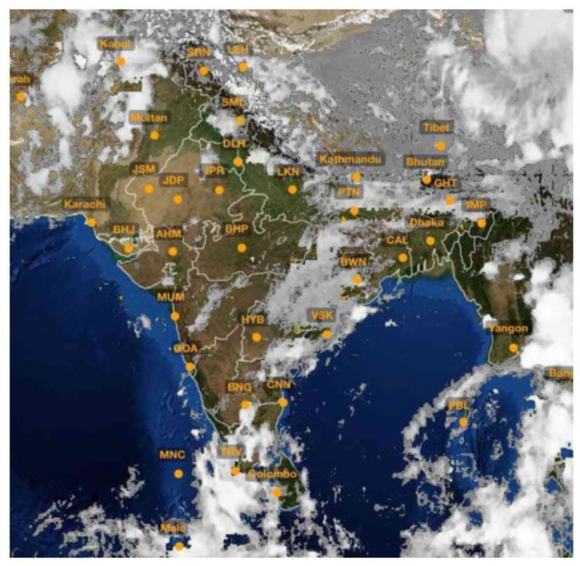
IMD warning

Meanwhile, a Friday evening update from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Palakkad and Malappuram are on orange alert for isolated heavy-to-very heavy rainfall on Saturday.

Rainfall is expected to strengthen significantly over Kerala from Sunday, it said.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Saturday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, coastal Karnataka and Lakshadweep. Heat wave conditions likely in some parts of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh; in isolated pockets over Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	38.6	28.0	Kozhikode	—	36.0	27.2
Ahmedabad	—	44.2	31.0	Kurnool	1	37.0	24.8
Aizawl	—	36.0	24.6	Lucknow	—	42.4	25.7
Allahabad	—	42.2	28.4	Madurai	0.6	31.7	26.1
Bengaluru	—	29.2	22.1	Mangaluru	—	34.9	24.8
Bhopal	—	40.2	28.8	Mumbai	—	36.0	28.4
Bhubaneswar	—	39.5	27.4	Mysuru	—	31.3	23.2
Chandigarh	—	44.5	26.7	New Delhi	—	43.6	25.4
Chennai	3.2	31.3	26.6	Patna	—	41.7	29.2
Coimbatore	35	33.9	25.2	Port Blair	—	34.0	27.2
Dehradun	—	40.7	23.0	Puducherry	4	30.9	26.0
Gangtok	3	24.5	17.4	Pune	1.5	38.7	24.8
Goa	3	34.5	25.6	Raipur	—	35.0	29.3
Guwahati	0.2	37.8	25.6	Ranchi	—	38.2	27.2
Hubballi	—	32.0	24.0	Shillong	128	27.7	15.6
Hyderabad	65	31.9	22.3	Shimla	—	32.6	19.0
Imphal	—	33.1	22.7	Srinagar	—	29.7	13.0
Jaipur	—	44.0	30.1	Thiruvananthapuram	64	32.0	24.8
Kochi	0.2	32.6	26.8	Tiruchi	33	35.7	26.0
Kohima	—	27.2	17.6	Vijayawada	7	30.8	26.8
Kolkata	—	39.5	29.2	Visakhapatnam	4	34.7	27.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	..	..	.12	...129	...102	
Bengaluru	.15	.21	.75	40	52	
Chennai	.11	.22	119	15	15	
Delhi	.36	130	122	...354	...368	
Hyderabad	...3	.26	.48	32	79	
Kolkata	...7	.16	.30	30	51	
Lucknow	...7	.69	.25	...327	...184	
Mumbai	.35	.53	.39	62	...113	
Pune	..	.60	105	42	60	
Visakhapatnam	.12	.39	.12	32	60	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 322 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 21

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
EXTRA-ORDINARY APPELLATE JURISDICTION
SPECIAL LEAVE PETITION (CIVIL) No(s) 925-926 OF 2024
WITH PRAYER FOR INTERIM RELIEF

KARNATAKA STATE FINANCIAL CORPORATION — Petitioner(s)

VERSUS

VIMALA KEDIA AND OTHERS — Respondent(s)

To,

1 VIMALA KEDIA W/O LATE RAMOTHAR KEDIA, R/AT NO. 5/2, 2ND CROSS NANJAPPA ROAD, SHANTHI NAGAR, BANGALORE- 560027, **KARNATAKA** — **PID:** 88526/2024 FOR R[1] IN SLP(C) NO.925-926/ 2024 (SEC IV-A)

2 RENU KEJRIWALA **D/O LATE RAMOTHAR KEDIA, R/O NO. Z-202, SIDDARTHA APARTMENTS, M.P. ENCLAVE, NEW DELHI - 110001** — PID: 88527/2024 FOR R[2] IN **SLP(C) NO.925-926/2024 (SEC IV-A)**

3 **NEETHU TIBRIWALA D/O LATE RAMOTHAR KEDIA, R/AT NO. 15, THILAK MANDIR ROAD, VALLEY PARLE EAST, MUMBAI-500057, MAHARASHTRA** — **PID: 88528/2024 FOR R[3] IN SLP(C) NO.925-926/2024 (SEC IV-A)**

4 **ASHISH KEDIA S/O LATE RAMOTHAR KEDIA, R/AT NO. 5/2, 2ND CROSS NANJAPPA ROAD, SHANTHI NAGAR, BANGALORE-560027, KARNATAKA** — **PID: 88529/2024 FOR R[4] IN SLP(C) NO.925-926/2024 (SEC IV-A)**

WHEREAS the Petition for SPECIAL LEAVE PETITION (CIVIL) to Appeal **with application for CONDONATION OF DELAY IN FILING, EXEMPTION FROM FILING C/C OF THE IMPUGNED JUDGMENT** above mentioned (copy enclosed) filed in the Registry by **Dr. MRS. VIPIN GUPTA**, Advocate on behalf of the Petitioner above named was listed for hearing before this Court on **05th January, 2024** when the Court was pleased to pass the following order:-

"1 **Ms Kiran Suri, senior counsel appearing on behalf of the petitioner submits that though the Registry has recorded a delay of 3508 days in challenging the original judgment dated 4 February 2014, the petitioner has filed a review petition before the High Court in terms of the order of this court dated 01 December 2016 which has been disposed of by the High Court on 24 August 2023. Hence, it is submitted that there is only a delay of 18 days.**

2 Delay condoned.

3 Issue notice returnable on 2 February 2024.

4 Dasti service, in addition, is permitted."

ANDWHEREAS, the matter above-mentioned was listed before **Ld. Registrar's Court** on **09th April, 2024,** When the following order was passed:-

"**Ld. Counsel for the petitioner has filed an Application for substituted service by way of publication in respect of respondent Nos.1 to 5. In the meantime, respondent No.5 has already entered appearance. Hence, the said application stands allowed in respect of respondent Nos.1 to 4 only. Ld. Counsel for the petitioner to file proof of publication within four weeks.**

Respondent Nos.5 and 6 are granted four weeks' time for filing counter affidavit.

List again on 18.7.2024."

NOW, THEREFORE, TAKENOTICE that the above petition with prayer for interim relief will be posted for hearing before this Court in due course and you may enter appearance before this Court either in person or through an advocate on record of this Court duly appointed by you in that behalf within 30 days from the date of service of notice. You may thereafter show cause to the Court on the day that may subsequently be specified as to why delay in filing SLP delay in filing SLP be not condoned and Special Leave Petition and interim relief as prayed be not granted and the resultant appeal be not allowed.

You may file your affidavit in opposition to the petition as provided under Rule 14(1) of Order XXI, S.C.R.2013 within 30 days from the date of receipt of notice or not later than 2 weeks before the date appointed for hearing, whichever be earlier, but shall do so only by setting out the grounds in opposition to the questions of law or grounds set out in the SLPs and may produce such pleadings and documents filed before the Court/Tribunal against whose order the SLP is filed and shall also set out the grounds for not granting interim order or for vacating interim order if already granted.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that if you fail to enter appearance as aforesaid, no further notice shall be given to you even after the grant of special leave for hearing of the resultant appeal and the matter above mentioned shall be disposed of in your absence.

Dated: 13th April, 2024 — **Sd/- ASSISTANT REGISTRAR**

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
Tender Notice No: SHAHPUR-WADI-Tele/ 2024-25-02 Dated : 13.05.2024.
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following work.

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
Provision of OFC and 6 Quad based Communication system in Shahpur - Wadi Section (47 Km's) in connection with New line work of Gadag (Talkal) - Wadi Section of South Western Railway.	Rs. 8,94,05,304/-

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 15:00 Hrs on 03-06-2024**
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Deputy Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer / Construction, Hubballi
PUB/82/AAS/PRB/SWR/2024-25
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

Rail Wheel Plant/Bela (Distt.: Saran), Bihar-841221
E-Open Tender Notice No.:- S/RWP/E/2024-25/09, dated : 16.05.2024. Principal Chief Materials Manager /Rail Wheel Plant, Bela for and on behalf of the President of India invites **online "e-Open Tender",** through Indian Railways E-Procurement Website **www.ireps.gov.in,** for supply of following Stores item at RWP/Bela. The closing time of all tenders is 14:00 hrs. **SN 1, Tender No. :** 01241052, **Short Description of item :** Asbestos Gasket, **Quantity :** 85000 nos., **Date of Tender Closing/ Opening :** 12.06.2024 at 14.00 Hrs.
1. Website address, on which full tender details can be seen and downloaded from, is **www.ireps.gov.in. 2.** The prospective firms/bidders submitting bid are advised to remain in touch with the above website for updates including **Addendum/ Corrigendum/ Cancellation** with respect to the above tender. However, this information will also be invariably published in the all concerned newspapers.
PCMM, Rail Wheel Plant, Bela
RWP/CPRO/Advt./2024-25/24

E-TENDER NOTICE SAI
Sports Authority of India, NSSC, Bangalore invites e-tender for following works: -
1. **SAI/NSSC/ENGG/INFRA/STC-DHARWAD/17/2024-25** for Appointment of PMC for C/o Industrial Sheds for Wrestling Hall / Kabaddi Hall at STC Dharwad under SAI NSSC, Bangalore.. For more details please visit E-Tender website **http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app, https://sportsauthorityofindia.nic.in & http://www.saisouth-bangalore.com.**
The Last date of Submission of E-Tender is 22.05.2024 up to 15.00 hrs.
Sd/- Deputy Director-Infra

E-TENDER NOTICE SAI
Sports Authority of India, NSSC, Bangalore invites e-tender for following works: -
1. **SAI/NSSC/ENGG/INFRA/Toilet Blocks – HDC - UGWS/343/2024-25** for Appointment of PMC for Construction of Toilet Block (2 No's), Help Desk Centre & Under Ground Water Sump at SAI NSSC, Bangalore. For more details please visit E-Tender website **http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app, https://sportsauthorityofindia.nic.in & http://www.saisouth-bangalore.com.**
The Last date of Submission of E-Tender is 29.05.2024 up to 15.00 hrs.
Sd/- Deputy Director-Infra

PUBLIC NOTICE
The general public is hereby informed that my client intends to purchase the property described in the schedule hereunder from its present owners **(1)Mr.R.Guru Mani,** s/o late K.Ramachandran, **(2)Mrs.N.Geetha,** w/o Mr.R.Guru Mani and **(3)Mrs.Aparna Ramakrishnan,** d/o Mr.R.Guru Mani all residing at No.1031, 4th B Main, 4th Block, 1st Stage, HBR Layout **(4)Mrs.Swapna Guru Mani,** d/o Mr.R.Guru Mani represented by **General Power of Attorney holder Mr.R.Guru Mani,** residing at No.2759, Ferrara Circle, Sanjose, CA-95111, they having jointly acquired title to the same under Sale Deed dated 08.05.2017 registered as document No.BNS-1-01628/2017-18 of Book I, CD No.BNSD591 at the office of the Sub-Registrar, Shivajinagar (Banaswadi), Bengaluru.
All persons having or claiming any right, title, estate or interest by way of inheritance, share, sale, mortgage, transfer, lease, tenancy, lien, charge, trust, maintenance, easement, gift, devise, bequest, exchange, pre-emption, possession or encumbrance or otherwise howsoever into or upon the Schedule Property herein below described are called upon to intimate the same in writing to the undersigned at the below given address along with all the documents relating to such claim within **15 days** from the date of publication of this notice, failing which any such claim of any party shall be deemed to have been waived for all legal practical purposes and shall not be entertained hereafter and I shall opine that the Schedule Property is free of any claims and my client will be free to proceed with the proposed purchase of the Schedule Property.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY
All that piece and parcel of Residential Vacant Site bearing **No.645** formed by Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) measuring East to West 60 feet and North to South 40 feet in all admeasuring **2,400 sq.ft** situated at HBR Layout, Sector - 4, 1st Stage, Bengaluru and bounded on:
East by : Road
West by : Site No.616
North by : Site No.646
South by : Site No.644
Tejaswini
Advocate
Unit No.202, Hubtown Prime, Level – 3, A.M.Road, Ulsoor, Bengaluru - 560042.
Mail ID: xv.lawyer@gmail.com
Place : Bengaluru Date : 18.05.2024

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice No. 06 UBL 2024-25 Dated : 10-05-2024
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Sl.	Name of the Work	Approx. Value
1	**Hubballi Division :** Improvements to waterway Bridges like pitching, flooring, retaining wall etc., in Assistant Divisional Engineer / Ballari Section.	Rs. 2,24,76,426/-
2	**Hubballi Division :** Improvements to waterway Bridges like pitching, flooring, retaining wall etc., in Assistant Divisional Engineer / Gadag Section.	Rs. 1,97,28,270/-
3	**Hubballi Division :** TSR(P) in Caranzol, Dudhsagar and Sonalium yard for total length of 4.11 Km.	Rs. 1,31,54,655/-

Last date for submission of bids: **Up to 11:00 Hrs on 07-06-2024**
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Senior Divisional Engineer / Co-ordination Hubballi
PUB/79/AAS/PRB/SWR/2024-25
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

PUBLIC NOTICE
The general public is hereby informed that **Mr. Harinder Bagai** the owner of the Three (3) bedroom Apartment bearing no.03 on the 16th floor, in the block/ wing B6 of the residential complex 'Elita Promenade' situated In Kothanur Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk (the Property) has lost the original registered Sale Deed dated 09th March 2012 registered as the Document No. JPN-1-11205-2011-12 stored in CD No.JPND 153 in the Office of the Sub Registrar J. P. Nagar, Bangalore with respect to the said property. Mr. Harinder Bagai has also lodged a Police complaint dated 27-02-2024 before Bengaluru City police station. The finder of the Sale Deed is requested to return the same to the below mentioned address. The Public are hereby warned that any transaction whatsoever with anyone with respect to the said Property other than the Owner mentioned above will be invalid and would be doing so at his/their own risk and does not bind the Owner. No other person than the above owner has any right, title or interest or charge or claim of any nature in relation to the said Property.
Mr. Bhaskar Reddy, Advocate
Fox Mandal & Associates LLP
Solicitors & Advocates
6/12, Gurappa Avenue, Primrose Road
BENGALURU 560 025.

Jharkhand Urja Sancharan Nigam Ltd.
(CIN: U40108JH2013SGC001704)
Regd. Office: 2nd Floor, JUSNL (SLDC) Building, Kusai Colony, Doranda, Ranchi-02 (E-mail:cetjusnl@gmail.com)
TENDER CANCELLATION NOTICE
Due to unavoidable circumstances, tender invited vide NIT no. 734/PR/JUSNL/2023-24 for Design, Engineering, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of LILO of one circuit of 132 kVD/C3 phase Madhupur – Jasidih Transmission Line at Devipur (Deoghar) GSS (7.2 KM Approx) on turnkey basis is hereby cancelled.
स्वहित एवं राष्ट्रहित में ऊर्जा बचावें। कृपया अपनी शिकायतों को 18003456570(कॉल सेन्टर) पर दर्ज करायें।
PR No. 322836 — **Sd/- General Manager, C&M (NWBP) JUSNL,Ranchi**
PR.NO.324900 Jharkhand Urja Sancharan Nigam Ltd(24-25):D

Jharkhand Urja Sancharan Nigam Ltd.
(CIN: U40108JH2013SGC001704)
Regd. Office: 2nd Floor, JUSNL (SLDC) Building, Kusai Colony, Doranda, Ranchi-02
(E-mail:cetjusnl@gmail.com)
TENDER CANCELLATION NOTICE
Due to unavoidable circumstances, tender invited vide NIT no. 733/PR/JUSNL/2023-24 for Design, Engineering, Supply of Materials / Equipments, erection, testing and commissioning of 2x50 MVA, 132/33 kV, Grid Substation including construction of control room building and approach road as well as other civil works at Devipur (Deoghar) on turnkey basis is hereby cancelled.
स्वहित एवं राष्ट्रहित में ऊर्जा बचावें। कृपया अपनी शिकायतों को 18003456570(कॉल सेन्टर) पर दर्ज करायें।
PR No. 322836 — **Sd/- General Manager, C&M (NWBP) JUSNL,Ranchi**
PR 324899 Jharkhand Urja Sancharan Nigam Ltd(24-25)D

PUBLIC NOTICE
The general/public at large are hereby notified that my client **SRI.S.GIRISH** S/o Late. Srinivas, R/at No.118, 2nd Main Road, 5th Cross, Chamarajpet Bangalore - 560 018, intends to purchase the schedule property, as described in the Schedule hereunder by way of Sale Deed from its owners **1.SRI.R.RANGANATHA** S/o. Late. Rangaswamayappa No.40/1, 5th Cross, 2nd Main Road, Chamarajpet, Bangalore -560018, **2.SRI.T.MANOHARA** S/o. Late. Thimmarayappa No.137/32, 2nd Main Road, Chamarajpet, Bangalore - 560 018, **3.SRI.M.PRAJWAL** S/o. Sri.T.Manohar, No.137/32, 2nd Main Road, Chamarajpet, Bangalore-560018, and **4.SRI.T.GOPALAKRISHNA,** S/o. Late. Thimmarayappa, No. 55/117, 2nd Main Road, Between 5th & 6th Cross, Chamarajpet, Bangalore-560018. Any Person/s institution / authority having any objection and bar or claim, rights, title or interest in the Schedule property, may lodge his/her/their/its objection or claim with the undersigned along with supporting documentary evidence within **10 days** from the date of the publication of this public notice. If no objections and/or claims are received within the stipulated period my client would proceed to purchase the Schedule Property.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY:
All the piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing No.55 consisting of ground and first floor (old Nos.117 & 99) situated at 2nd Main Road, 5th Cross, Chamarajpet, Bangalore 560 018 measuring East to West 30 feet and North to South 108 feet totally measuring about 3240 sq.ft together with building thereon along with passages within the property and bound on : East by : Mariyappa & Srinivas Property, West by : Private Property, North by : 2nd Main Road, South by : Conservancy Road.
RAVISHANKAR
ADVOCATE,
No.42/1, Appu Rao Road, Chamarajpet, Bangalore -560018

PUBLIC NOTICE (LOST DOCUMENT)
Public are informed that, my client **MRS. NAGEEN TAJ,** W/o. Mr. Sher Ali, aged about 59 years, R/at. No.11, 6th Cross, H. Siddaiah Road, Bengaluru-560 027 is the absolute owner in respect of All that piece and parcel of the property bearing No.14/1 [Earlier Front North Western Portion of premises bearing No.14 (Old No.22/6)], situated at 6th Cross, H. Siddaiah Road, Bangalore, BBMP Ward No.48, PID No.48-7-14/1, measuring East to West: 24-0 feet and North to South: 17-0 feet, and bounded on the: East by:Portion of property No.14 belonging to T. Abdul Munaf and Asmathunnisa, West by : 6th Cross Road, North by: Property belonging to Rehmathulla, South by : Portion of property No.14, 6th Cross, with passage belonging to T. Abdul Munaf and Asmathunnissa. Building Description: Building constructed on the schedule property with plinth area of 4 squares (1 squares Commercial along with fifteen H.P. Electricity and 3 squares Residential) with A.C. Sheet Roofing, Red Oxide Flooring, walls built with brick in cement mortar, Jungle Wood used for doors and windows., affirms that the original **1.** Gift deed dated 01.05.1963 executed by Smt. Byamma in favour of Smt. Gowramma registered as document No. 574/1963-64, of Book-01, Volume No. 387, before the office of the Sub-registrar, Basavanagudi, Bangalore, **2.** Origianl Sale deed dated 28.07.1969, executed by B.L. Gowramma in favour Mr. Md. Asmathulla Kamath in favour of Smt. Rahamthunnisa and duly registered as document No.1242/1969-70, of Book-1, Volume No.808, at Pages 171 to 176 registered before the Office of the Sub Registrar Basavanagudi Bangalore, **3.** Sale deed executed by Mohammed Azmathulla Kamath in favour of Mrs. Rahmathunnisa, registered as document No. 2969/1981-82, of Book-1, Volume No. 2969 at Pages 197-201, registered before the Office of the Sub Registrar Basavanagudi Bangalore, **4.** G.P.A dated 26.07.1989, executed by Smt. Rahamthunnisa in favor of Mr. Mohammed Amjad Ahmed belongs to our Customer **MRS. NAGEEN TAJ** has been lost/misplaced by my client and police complaint has been also lodged on **15.05.2024** to this effect.
Any person/s are in possession of the aforesaid original documents may return the same to under mentioned Advocate or anyone having any claim over the said property or any other claims by any person/s Nationalized banks, MNC Banks Private Banks, Co-Operative Banks any Financial institutions Governed by the RBI Rules may lodge their objections in writing within **15 days** from this day to the under mentioned Advocate.
S.SHABEER, Advocate,
S.S. Law Associates & Legal Consultants
No.12A, I Floor, HHS & HMS Complex, Cubbonpet Main Road, Bangalore -560 002

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Assistant Professor
IIBS

12.30 PM - 1.30 PM

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Dangers of divisiveness

Pitting citizens of the North against southern parties is a hazardous ploy

With polling over in 379 of the 543 constituencies after the fourth phase in the general election, the electoral campaigns of parties have reached closer to the end point. Deep into the campaign calendar, though, the disconnect between the concerns of the electorate and campaign rhetoric – especially that of BJP lynchpin and Prime Minister Narendra Modi – remains, unfortunately, intact. While job creation, inflation and development have been emphasised by voters as primary issues, Mr. Modi refuses to be driven by the idea of contesting mainly on his government's record over 10 years of rule and focusing on measures to ameliorate the main concerns. Instead, he seeks to do what he has always revelled in – attacking the Opposition with truths, half-truths, and non sequiturs. Mr. Modi's recourse to this is also helped by the shrill noise of television and social media being a useful tool to distract from concerns with the rhetoric that he has used, be it hate speech against Muslims or dog whistles to rev up support from Hindutva adherents. Other parties, including the Congress and its public face, Rahul Gandhi, are also – even if not to the same extent – guilty of raking up identity issues such as those related to caste politics. But Mr. Modi and some of his colleagues have taken vituperation as a campaigning device to new levels. In his rally in Jaunpur, he accused the Opposition in Uttar Pradesh, the SP and the Congress, of silence when their southern allies used "absurd and abusive language" for the people of U.P. and "sanatana dharma".

Some of the northern parties in the INDIA bloc have publicly disagreed with DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin's comments on "sanatana dharma" while emphasising their stances on social justice and taking on the issue of caste hierarchy. There is more that unites the politics of federalism and social justice espoused by these parties than what divides them – questions related to linguistic nationalism such as the need for English as a link language – but that is to be expected from coalitions made up of different political parties. Mr. Modi should focus on the differences in emphasis on how to tackle socio-economic issues between the BJP and the INDIA bloc. But, instead, his use of half-truths as a weapon to rile the Hindi heartland against southern parties is problematic, at a time when there is greater north-south economic integration, with working class citizens from the north migrating to the south for employment. Recently, the BJP inducted Manish Kashyap, a YouTube content creator who had been jailed in Tamil Nadu for spreading false news about Bihari migrants being attacked in the State. Such actions could foment divisive politics that does not help the Indian nation as a whole.

Stay invested

India should not tailor its ties with Iran to U.S. foreign policy changes

By signing a 10-year agreement with Iran to develop and operate the Chabahar port, India has taken its infrastructure and trade partnership with the Islamic Republic to the next level despite tensions in West Asia. India will invest $120 million and offer a credit facility of $250 million to further develop the terminal it operates in Chabahar's Shahid Beheshti port and related projects. However, after the deal was signed, the U.S. State Department said entities considering business deals with Iran "need to be aware that they are opening themselves up to and the potential risk of sanctions". In the past, American sanctions on Iran had delayed the project. Conceived in 2003, the project did not take off for years after the U.S. and the UN imposed sanctions on Tehran over its nuclear programme. India signed a memorandum of understanding in 2015 after Washington eased sanctions on Iran following that year's nuclear agreement, and in 2016, the contract was executed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Iran visit. The U.S.'s unilateral withdrawal from the nuclear deal in 2018 and reimposition of sanctions on Iran raised questions on India's continued cooperation with Tehran. But India managed to win a carve-out from U.S. sanctions that allowed it to operate the port through ad hoc measures.

The Chabahar port is critical for India's connectivity plans. First, it offers an alternative route to Afghanistan and Central Asia by bypassing Pakistan, allowing better trade with Central Asia. And, Chabahar is expected to be connected to the International North-South Transport Corridor (NSTC), bringing India closer to Europe through Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia. An alternative to the Suez route, a fully operational NSTC would reduce the time and money spent on intercontinental trade. The port, roughly 200 km from Pakistan's Gwadar, where China is developing a port as part of its BRI, would also help India expand its geopolitical influence in Central Asia. But the U.S. seems to have taken a narrow view of the project over its hostility with Iran. America's interests in the region have also changed. In 2018, when U.S. forces were backing the Islamic Republic government in Afghanistan, it gave a sanctions waiver to India as Kabul also stood to benefit from the port project. Today, U.S. troops are out of Afghanistan, the Taliban has replaced the Islamic Republic, and the U.S.'s focus is on containing Iran. India, in the past, had taken U-turns in its Iran engagement depending on the policy changes in Washington DC. It should not do that any more. It should stay invested in Chabahar and seek to improve its trade and connectivity projects with Central Asia, which is essential for India's continued rise.

After the civil war, the stifling impasse in Sri Lanka

A decade-and-a-half cannot heal the deep wounds from a protracted civil war. Tens of thousands of people perished across Sri Lanka's north and east even as it witnessed enormous destruction. Concerns of truth, accountability and justice linger, while questions of past and future political choices loom large. In this context, the emergence of a new generation should at the very least begin to change the social, economic, and political landscape of a war-torn region. However, economic reconstruction has hardly progressed, with subsequent crises setting back development further. Politics remains polarised and fraught without a political settlement. The social aspirations of the Tamil middle class remain wedded to somehow joining the diaspora, even as the working people living in the island's north and east remain destitute with few options. How does one explain this post-war impasse? And, what is the way out for Sri Lanka's war-torn people?

Ahilan Kadirgamar

is a political economist and Senior Lecturer, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka

Derailed reconstruction

Trains that were not seen by generations in the north resumed a decade ago. Banks and supermarkets were built along the carpeted roads, even as plush hotels opened for tourists and the Tamil diaspora began visiting Jaffna town. Yet, beneath this seeming prosperity, just a few miles into the countryside, the travails of the masses were evident in their desperation for stable livelihoods. Just as some rural communities began overcoming these challenges, when their fields, home gardens and coconut trees began bearing fruit, Sri Lanka descended into chaos again.

The Easter terror bombings of April 2019 shook the country, followed by the COVID-19 pandemic and now the economic crisis, the worst since Sri Lankan Independence. For a population that was surfacing from the dredges of war and dispossession, and turning its focus towards the education of its children and the employment of its youth, the current moment signals the loss of another generation.

Economic misery is seen nation-wide, as is outmigration with the long circling lines outside the passport office. For the deprived and the landless among the war-torn people, migration is out of question, economic opportunities are next to nil, and hunger is the new normal. Yet, there is no one to listen to them, much less to provide them support. Sinking in its crises, now compounded by International Monetary Fund-prescribed austerity measures, the state has abandoned them.

The myth of reviving the war-torn regions with the Tamil diaspora's deep pockets stands exposed by the meagre flow of investment funds. The international donor development projects that focused on infrastructure after the war have hardly revived the local economy. In fact, individualised assistance by non-government organisations has only disempowered families and trapped them in dependence. Many families, especially women, have been pushed into predatory microfinance debt.

> The future of the Tamil people is dependent on forging a new vision for themselves and the entire country, based on equality and freedom

Tamil politics across the spectrum has been negligent about the concerns of local livelihoods, as they are beholden to their class and social interests, with one foot in the Tamil diaspora. Politicians who talk big on accountability, especially to international actors, hardly engage with ordinary people. They peddle the myth of diaspora remittances sustaining war-affected communities, when, in reality, such remittances only reach a very small segment of the urban Tamil middle class.

Polarisation and the minorities

For the economic and political trajectory in the North and East after the war, it is the Rajapaksa regime that must take much of the blame for its jingoistic war victory celebration, a continued militarisation and the vulgar projection of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism. That said, it is unfortunate that Tamil nationalist politics continues to mirror its Sinhala counterpart in its self-sustenance through a polarising discourse. Little has changed in its dominant clamour for Tamil rights, as it harks back to the rhetoric of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, basks in enfeebling victimhood, and an unending faith in the international community. The regular post-war pilgrimages to the UN Human Rights Council by the political actors, social allies in civil society, and the virulent sections of the Tamil diaspora, conjure bombastic hopes in the Tamil public sphere. For them, this so-called accountability process is predicated on delivering international intervention.

In the meantime, political actors in the South and the North have hardly built social and economic bridges between the communities towards political reconciliation. Devolution of power to the regions and power-sharing at the centre have been repeatedly dumped for political expediency by those wielding power in Colombo. Indeed, that was the case with regime change in 2015, when a major opening towards a political settlement was lost in the rivalry between then President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. The persisting intransigence of the national leadership, along with the takeover of lands owned by the Tamil and Muslim minorities by the state, and ongoing attacks on memorialisation of the war dead reflect a grim reality.

There was the historic opportunity with the election of the first Northern Provincial Council in 2013, but it ended its tenure with utter disgrace in 2018, where the Tamil nationalist leadership had nothing to show even in terms of political or economic vision for its constituencies. The racism and arrogance of the political elite in Colombo and the hollowness of the Tamil political leadership have been the bane of Sri Lankan politics. Within the North and the East, Tamil-Muslim relations remain strained. The Northern Muslims evicted in an act of ethnic cleansing by the LTTE in October 1990 have hardly been reintegrated into Jaffna. The Hill Country Tamils of Indian origin, or Malaiyaha Tamils, who were displaced from the plantations to the North during successive pogroms, and following their disenfranchisement, found little solidarity in the North. They became bonded labour, then the cannon fodder for the civil war, and many to this day remain landless or settled in land unsuitable for agriculture. Caste oppression in Jaffna is now reconsolidating by stealth around the temples funded by the Tamil diaspora, while some groups are attempting Hindutva-styled communal mobilisations.

Future of the Tamil people

Reflecting on the misery and dispossession of our people today, one is reminded of the powerful words of the Tamil leftist, V. Karalasingham. In his book titled, *The Way Out for the Tamil speaking people*, he had the following to say in 1963, just 15 years after Independence.

"We now come against a strange paradox. The Tamil speaking people have been led in the last decade by an apparently resolute leadership guided by the best intentions receiving not merely the widest support of the people but also their enthusiastic cooperation and yet the Tamil speaking people find themselves at the lowest ebb in their history. Despite all their efforts the people have suffered one defeat after another, one humiliation after another. How is one to explain the yawning gulf between the strivings of the people and the virtually hopeless impasse in which they find themselves?"

No one would have imagined six decades ago, how much worse the situation of the Tamil people could become, and to what decrepit depths Tamil politics could descend. The future of the Tamil people is dependent on rejecting bankrupt Tamil nationalism and forging a new vision for themselves and the entire country.

In the great revolt of 2022 or the 'Aragalaya', where Sri Lankans from different ethnic and religious backgrounds came together to chase away a President, who had claimed the status of a supreme war hero and custodian of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, there is inspiration for what our country can be.

Despite the authoritarian and economic repression today, the years ahead could take us on a different path, charted by the struggles for social and economic justice confronting the most formidable economic crisis in close to a century. The Tamil people must rethink their strategies, depart from the isolationist and suicidal politics that has reduced them to historical irrelevance, and join forces with all the peoples to determine not just their own future but also the democratic future of the country, based on equality and freedom.

The hyperpoliticisation of Indian higher education

Indian higher education has always been political. Politicians started colleges and universities to advance their careers and build support. State and central government authorities sometimes placed new post secondary institutions in politically advantageous locations. Many of them were established to cater to the demands of the electorate based on various socio-cultural factors as well. The naming and renaming of universities, especially by State governments, are often influenced by politics. Academic appointments or promotions were sometimes made for reasons other than the quality of the professor, vice-chancellor or principal. And, especially in many undergraduate colleges, the norms of academic freedom were not always firmly followed – and teachers were careful in what they taught or wrote.

Yet, overall, Indian higher education, especially in the universities, adhered to international norms of academic freedom. Generally, professors were free to teach without fear of being disciplined or fired for their views. They were able to do research and to publish their work freely, and to speak and write in public forums and the media. The universities, while often mired in bureaucracy, occasionally faced allegations of political interference in the recruitment of faculty members. However, they enjoyed relative autonomy when it came to the promotion of existing faculty.

Philip G. Altbach

is Distinguished Fellow at the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College, U.S.

Fundamental political change

It is fair to say that Indian higher education has become fundamentally politicised. This is a grave danger to academic institutions, the academic profession, and intellectual life generally. These trends can, of course, be seen as part of the "illiberal" trends in society generally – and, of course, India is not alone in these developments. And, at some point, the rest of the world, including India's potential academic partners, will notice this deterioration in academe, and it may affect their decisions at a time when India seeks to join the top levels of global higher education.

> There is a grave threat to academic institutions, the academic profession, and intellectual life in general

Examples of change

Not long ago, Congress Party leader Rahul Gandhi made some comments about politically appointed vice chancellors– and received much criticism. But the fact is that Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) authorities throughout the country have been replacing university vice chancellors with politically pliable appointees, many of whom have little or no higher education experience. And, these appointees have been reshaping the universities with politically allied faculty and through other changes. This is the first time in India's post-independence history that such direct interference in academe has become common. It is so egregious that the non-BJP governments in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Punjab are trying to remove the centrally-appointed State Governors as chancellors of the State universities, which give them power to control the vice-chancellor appointment process.

Academic freedom is also under attack. Perhaps the most sinister aspect is that self-censorship has become common, especially in the social sciences and humanities. Even senior academics are afraid to publish work that they think might create problems for them from state authorities or pro-BJP media. There have been several widely reported cases where well-known professors have published controversial material and their universities have not protected them. It was reported that in his resignation letter to Ashoka University in 2021, prominent political scientist Pratap Bhanu Mehta wrote that his public writing in support of a politics that tries to honour constitutional values of freedom and equal respect for all citizens was perceived to carry risks for the university.

Respected journals known for their independence have become off limits. The fact that these pressures are being felt even at the top of India's academic system says a lot about the situation throughout Indian higher education Professor Sameena Dalwai, a faculty member at the O.P. Jindal Global University, encountered an online smear campaign recently, orchestrated by right-wing groups alongside the lodging of a police complaint against her.

Even students have become embroiled in campus politicisation. Recently, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) suspended a PhD student over alleged "anti-national activities". However, the Progressive Students Forum, formerly led by the student, claimed that his suspension was due to participating in a protest march against the central government's "anti-student policies".

Of course, traditional campus politics continues, although rightist organisations such as the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad are more active than in the past even at traditionally leftist universities such as Jawaharlal Nehru University. But what is new is that students are reporting to campus administrators on their professors if they disagree with the content of their classes. And, sometimes, this leads to faculty members being disciplined

The implications

These trends are extraordinarily dangerous for Indian higher education and civic life in general. Most important, an independent and free academic sector is important for any society. The academic profession must be free to engage in unfettered research and have the ability to publish, and to speak out, in areas of their academic expertise. This is as true for the "soft sciences" as it is for STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields. This may be especially the case in India, where many top intellectuals and analysts are in the universities. Further, as India seeks to build world-class universities and to engage with the best universities worldwide, academic freedom and autonomy is a necessary prerequisite.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

An illegality

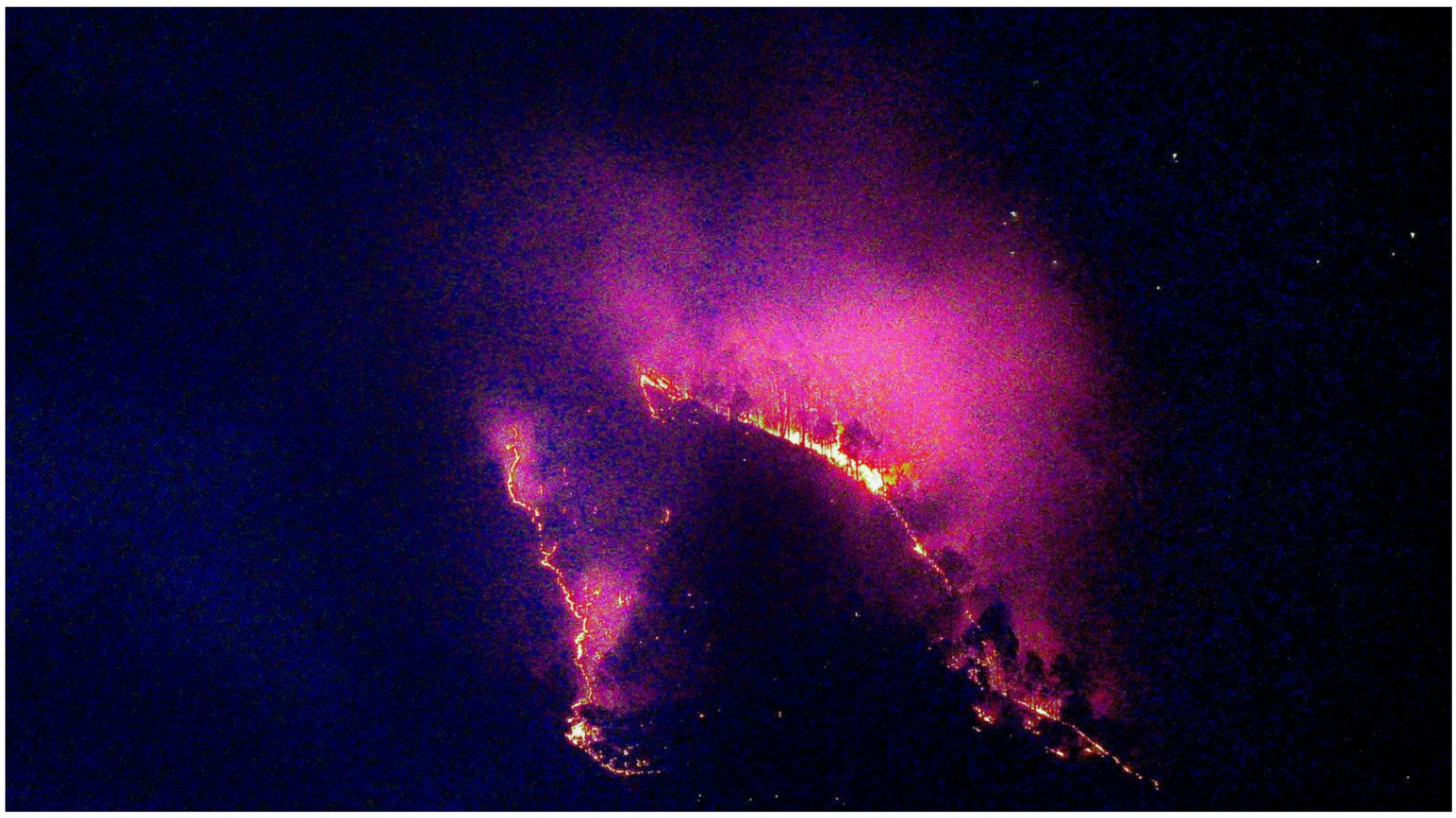
The Supreme Court of India, by invalidating the arrest of Prabir Purkayastha, a senior journalist, under the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, on the ground that he was not informed immediately of the reasons for his arrest has rightly reinforced the sacrosanct principles of law. It was in breach of Article 22 of the Constitution and it is surprising that the Magistrate Court and the Delhi High Court upheld this illegality. The top court should not have omitted to impose costs as it was a constitutional omission by the agency. In future, if persons are arrested in violation of due process, courts should impose costs and action should be taken against erring officials. It is also time that the UAPA is removed from the statute books. The right to speech is a precious right and the freedom of speech should be safeguarded.

N.G.R. Prasad,
Chennai

Peerless footballer

The decision of ace footballer and former captain of the Indian team, Sunil Chhetri, to hang up his boots will bring down the curtain on the illustrious career of one of the finest footballers India has produced. ('Sport' page, May 17). Chhetri was a delight to watch as he wove circles around the rival defence and scored goals, at times from unconceivable angles. India has been blessed with great talent in football. There is hardly any doubt that Chhetri deserves a place in this pantheon of all time greats of the game.

C.V. Aravind,
Bengaluru



A forest fire in Nainital district in Uttarakhand on May 6, 2024. Since November 2023, when forest fires began to rage, there have been 1,038 incidents in the State. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

The burning hills of Uttarakhand

Five people were killed in May in forest fires that have been raging in Uttarakhand since last November. The forest department attributes the fires to out-migration, high-tension wires, and the abundance of pine trees, while the State government has said in the Supreme Court that the fires are completely manmade. **Ishita Mishra** travels across the State and finds that villagers, mostly women, are helping extinguish the flames

On May 2, Gyanu Chalaune and his wife Basanti trudged up the hills in Sunrakot village in the scenic district of Almora in Uttarakhand to collect resin from the chir pine trees in the forest. The couple had moved from Nepal to Uttarakhand just last year for a better life and education for their three children. The temperature that morning was above 30°C. They worked to extract the resin, called *leesa* in the hills, for Ramesh Bakuni, a contractor. They earned ₹50,000-60,000 if they worked for 10 hours a day for six months.

As they were getting ready to leave, the couple heard a scream. They saw a man running on the hilltop, desperately trying to shake off flames that had engulfed him. They realised with horror that he was Deepak Pujara, a friend. The Chalaunes scrambled to the hilltop and found Pujara's wife, Tara, lying on the ground, half burnt. Quickly, they broke a green branch off a nearby tree and began hitting Pujara, even as their clothes caught fire. Before anyone could help them, the four victims were severely burnt. All of them succumbed to injuries in hospital.

Bakuni did not have the courage to break the news to Chalaune's children for days. "They have been playing in my garden for months. I didn't have the heart to tell them what had happened," says Bakuni, who is worried that people will no longer work for him. The children are now under the care of their uncle in Nepal's Bajhang district, from where they came.

Five people have been killed and four injured in forest fires in Uttarakhand this year. According to a 2019 report of the Forest Survey of India, Uttarakhand has a recorded forest area of 38,000 square kilometres, which is 71.05% of its geographical area. Since November 2023, when forest fires began to rage, there have been 1,038 incidents that have gutted 1,385.5 hectares (ha) of forest land till May 10. While authorities have dismissed these as "annual affairs" in the hills, the cost of these fires has been borne by the people whose lives depend on the mountains.

Flame of the forest

A booklet on the Uttarakhand forest department website says increasing migration of people from here to other States, which has left the hills barren; high-tension wires; and the abundance of chir pine trees, which are highly inflammable in nature, are the main reasons for forest fires. While the youth don't know how to tackle forest fires because the current academic curriculum does not educate them about the environment, older generations, who predominantly populate the hills, are unable to climb the hilltops to control the fires, the booklet says.

"People in [the] hills are now getting cooking gas under [the] ambitious Ujjawala scheme of the Central government and hence, villagers have stopped going to forests in [the] hills to collect wood for cooking, which is also a reason for increasing forests fires," it adds.

Dhananjai Mohan, who is in charge of the Head of Forest Force in Uttarakhand, says surfaces have become drier because of an excessive dry spell and less snowfall than usual this year. This has caused fires to spread faster in the forests, which are full of pine trees. According to the forest department website, Uttarakhand has 3,94,383.84 ha of chir pine forests. Chir pine trees constitute 15% of the 13 varieties of trees in the State.

> In an environment already conducive to fires, forest fires spread quickly when villagers burn stubble in the fields.
>
> **DHANANJAY MOHAN**
> In-charge, Head of Forest Force in Uttarakhand

"In this environment already conducive to fires, forest fires spread quickly when villagers burn stubble in the fields. Villages and forests are interspersed in the State. Forest fires also occur when people leave burnt cigarettes in the forest or set forests on fire to clear the land in the belief that it will boost the growth of fodder," he says.

Dousing fires for a mango drink, biscuits

It is May 6. In Almora's Sitlakhet, located 1,900 meters above sea level in the Kumaon Himalayas, the hills, laden with tall trees, which were once green, are not visible from the balconies of homes in the villages; they have disappeared under a thick cover of smog.

The trees are now black, and the ashes of burnt pine leaves cover the forest floor. The mountains, which always promise clean and cool air, radiate heat. Instead of the aroma of flowers, the smell of burnt wood lingers in the air.

Around 20 women from Sitlakhet and the nearby Bhakar village come down from a hilltop after dousing a forest fire. Using green bushes, their only weapon against the towering flames, they worked hard for 10 hours. Their clothes are soaked in sweat and ash; they look exhausted.

The women belong to a 300-member group in Sitlakhet called 'Jungle Ke Dost (friends of forests)'. Their mentor is Gajendra Pathak, 56, a pharmacist in a local healthcare centre who brought these women and some men together in a community initiative last year to tackle forest fires. On his call, the members of the group, mostly women, set out to put out fires.

In return for their effort, the women are offered nothing but a 125 millilitre tetra pack of Frooti, a popular, sweet mango-flavoured drink; and some biscuits. Pathak has ordered these, and the forest ranger, Manoj Lohani, has paid for them. The women tie the packets to the corner of their sarees to take home for their children.

One of them, Indumati, a housewife, is desperate to go home. "Sir, please take me," she says to Pathak, who is with them. "My six-month-old child must be hungry. I breastfed him at 10 a.m. before coming here. It's 6:30 p.m. now," she says, as she wipes her worn-out slippers.

Pathak stops a Jeep passing by and asks the women to sit inside. Lohani gives a few of the women a gardening rake before they climb into the vehicle They use this to clear the forest line so that fires can be stopped early.

"These women are the reason you see some greenery around. Otherwise, the forest fires would have ruined everything. It is sad that we are not in a position to do anything for them. They risk their lives to save our mountains," says Pathak, who feels that the government must provide life insurance for the people of the State who help mitigate forest fires.

On being asked why there are more women than men in the group, Debuli Devi, 65, says, "*Ye aadmi hi to jungle main aag lagate hain. Woh kya ise bhujayenge?* (It is the men who set the forest on fire. How will they douse the fire?)"

Similarly, in Patwa Dagar village of Nainital district, Sunil Rawat says he has helped extinguish more than 20 forest fires since April 19. "Sitlakhet is not the only place where this happens. Villagers across the State come in large numbers to support the forest department, which has now woken up from a deep slumber, to control these incidents," he says.

The District Forest Officer of Nainital, Chandra Shekhar Joshi, says the forest department has sent a proposal to the State government asking for remuneration for the villagers who help mitigate fires. Nainital district, with the largest forest area (70.67%) in the State, has around 300 forest fire watchers on its rolls. Half of them are women.

Of the recorded forest area of 38,000 sq km in Uttarakhand, the forest department manages 26.5 lakh ha of reserved forests where human intervention is banned, while van panchayats, or community-led forest managers, manage 7.32 lakh ha. As per a forest department bulletin, there is greater damage to reserved forests than to the area managed by the van panchayats.

After the recent fires, the State government announced insurance cover of ₹3 lakh for 4,000 contract employees of the forest department.

Playing politics

On May 8, the Uttarakhand government said in the Supreme Court that "all the instances of forest fires are manmade." It informed the Court that 388 criminal cases had been registered across the State against those found setting the forests on fire. In most cases, people who were arrested had attempted to burn stubble, but had failed to control the fires which spread due to strong winds, the government said.

The 380-page interim status report submitted by the government in Court said that a section of the media had reported that 40% of Uttarakhand was burning, which was "misleading", and that only 0.1% of forest cover was affected by fires. The State informed the Court that the State Disaster Response Force and the National Disaster Response Force had been deployed to tackle the forest fires. The Indian Air Force was using Bambi Buckets (collapsible containers that hang from a helicopter and release large amounts of water in targeted areas) to douse the flames, it said.

The government added in the report that the Uttarakhand Forest Fire Mitigation Project 2023-28 was pending with the Central government. The report also said that forest fires were not "new" in the State and that there was no longer an "emergency" situation.

The government informed the Court that it is tying up with IIT Roorkee to explore the option of cloud seeding to increase precipitation and trigger rainfall. Dismissing this solution, the Court said "cloud seeding or depending on [the] rain gods is not the answer" to forest fires.

The next day, after rains, the government claimed credit for having "controlled" the forest fires completely. But fires have raged on. On May 17 alone, 11 forest fires were reported.

On the same day, the Court adjourned the case to September 2024 after expressing satisfaction with the State's response on the measures it was taking to tackle the problem. The State said that it had used the entire Compensatory Afforestation Fund for firefighting and fire prevention and was filling up vacant posts at the field level in the forest department, among other things.

The Congress was quick to use this issue in its Lok Sabha election campaign to target the State government, led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). "While fires continued to burn the forests in April, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami was busy travelling to other States to campaign for BJP candidates. Even the Forest Minister, Subodh Uniyal, was campaigning in Assam," said Garima Dasauni, the spokesperson of Congress.

After completing his campaign, Dhami met with officials and ordered the police to charge those found setting the forests on fire with the Gangster Act and the Uttarakhand Public and Private Property Damage Recovery Act, 2024.

> These women are the reason you see some greenery around. Otherwise, the forest fires would have ruined everything. They risk their lives to save our mountains.
>
> **GAJENDRA PATHAK**
> Head of 'Jungle Ke Dost'

Where solutions lie

Pathak believes that great injustice is being done to the chir pine tree, which many people in Uttarakhand hold as the main culprit of the fires. "This tree, which hardly needs maintenance, is a major source of timber and fuel wood. Its trunk is used to make furniture. Its leaves are used for decoration. Its bark is a source of charcoal, resin, and coal tar, which are not just used by villagers, but also sold to earn money," he says. "Is there any other tree which gives us so much?"

The State has developed a concept to generate electricity from pine needles, which fall from the trees from mid-March until the onset of rains in July every year. But the low price offered for the collection of these needles is not helping.

This year, Dhami announced the start of a scheme, Pirul Lao-Paise Pao (bring pine leaves and get money), under which the State purchases pine leaves at the rate of ₹50 per kg, much higher than the ₹3 per kg, which has been the rate so far.

Pathak suggests that the government focus more on community participation to mitigate forest fires. He also believes that the Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) technique should be adopted across the State. This simple and low-cost forest restoration method involves facilitating the natural regeneration of degraded or deforested lands by providing favourable conditions for the growth of indigenous tree species. It involves a range of techniques such as the removal of invasive species, the creation of microsites for establishing seedlings, and the protection of natural regeneration from grazing and other disturbances. "ANR will not even cost half of what the government spends on planting trees. And finally, what we see of the government's initiative is not even 10% of the total saplings planted," he says. Establishing a fire line across the mountains is crucial to mitigate fires, he adds.

The forest fires in Uttarakhand have also ignited communal flames after a video emerged of young men celebrating, even as fires raged behind them. Some people accused Muslims of setting the forests on fire to "take revenge" on the State government which introduced a Uniform Civil Code and embarked on an "anti-encroachment drive" in Haldwani in February, which sparked riots. The police arrested the men, who hailed from Bihar and claimed to have recorded the video to gain some 'likes' on Instagram.

While the fires are being doused, Hemant Dhyani, from Ganga Avahan, an NGO which works to save the river Ganga, worries about the snowball effect of recurring forest fires. "Forests get burnt in fires. This reduces the strength of the mountains and the soil. When it rains, the loose soil fails to retain water and impacts ground water rejuvenation, causing flash floods. As the loose boulders crash and water also gushes down, landslides occur," he explains

Ravi Chopra, an environmentalist from Uttarakhand, says the forest department in the State has "very few or no capabilities" to control forest fires. "Nothing can be done to mitigate forest fires unless they empower the local people and take them into confidence," he says.

In return for their efforts, the women of Jungle Ke Dost, a community-led initiative to extinguish forest fires, are offered a 125 millilitre tetra pack of Frooti and some biscuits. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

From Page One

Why delay in uploading turnout data, SC asks EC

The NGO said that there was also an unusually sharp spike in figures from the initial voter turnout percentages released by the EC. The development has raised alarm bells in the public's mind about the authenticity of the polling data available and even whether the electronic voting machines (EVMs) have been switched.

Senior advocate Maninder Singh, for the EC, said the application was a deliberate attempt to disturb the General Elections.

Mr. Singh said a judgment of the Supreme Court on April 26 had discussed every aspect, including Form 17C, threadbare. Mr. Bhushan countered that the EVM case judgment had not dealt with the Form 17C point.

The court listed the case for May 24.

The petition said the voter turnout data for the first two phases of the Lok Sabha elections were published by the EC on April 30, after 11 days of the first phase of polling held on April 19 and four days after the second phase of polling held on April 26.

"The inordinate delay in the release of final voter turnout data, coupled with the unusually high revision [of over 5%] in the EC press note of April 30 and the absence of disaggregated constituency and polling station figures in absolute numbers, has raised concerns and public suspicion regarding the correctness of the data... These apprehensions must be addressed and put to rest," the petition has said.

'Have proof of Kejriwal's chats with hawala group'

An accused seeking bail has to satisfy the stringent twin conditions that he is *prima facie* innocent and is not likely to commit an offence in the future.

During the hearing, the ED said it had evidence that ₹45 crore in "kickbacks" out of ₹100 crore in "bribe" went to AAP coffers to campaign for the Goa Assembly elections in 2022. Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju alleged the kickbacks were sent via hawala operators and Mr. Kejriwal was the "kingpin" behind the scam.

Senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, for Mr. Kejriwal, countered that the Central agency had nothing to show that any money came to his client or was used in the Goa election campaign.

He submitted that the ED had no new evidence against Mr. Kejriwal, except "zero-weight" statements recorded from accused-turned-approvers till July last year. Mr. Singhvi asked why the ED had waited from July 2023 till March 2024 to arrest Mr. Kejriwal.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the ED, pitched in that the senior lawyer was being "economical with the truth".

Spain blocks arms ship from Chennai to Israel

"The Foreign Ministry will systematically reject such stopovers for one obvious reason: the Middle East does not need more weapons, it needs more peace," he stated.

The ship was carrying 27 tonnes of explosives according to local reports. It was to make a port call at Cartegena in Spain.

The incident comes amid an ongoing row between Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's party and his coalition partners over another ship, *Borkum*, that was due to dock at Cartegena port on Friday over allegations that it was carrying arms meant for Israel. However, the Spanish government has said that the arms it is ferrying are meant for the Czech Republic.

Belgium had suspended two arms export licences to Israel.

Nearly 6 million trees disappeared, says study

For their analysis, the researchers combined satellite-imagery from two repositories – RapidEye and PlanetScope – to estimate changes in tree number from 2010 to 2022.

Trees detected by RapidEye had an average crown size (the leafy outgrowth of tree) of 96 sq.m and such a high loss rate of mature trees over less than a decade is "unexpected", the authors note.

"The disappearance of mature farmland trees was observed in many areas, but numbers rarely exceed five to 10%, except for areas in central India, in particular in the States of Telangana and Maharashtra, where we document massive losses of large trees. Here, several hotspot areas have lost up to 50% of their large farmland trees, with up to 22 trees per square kilometre disappearing. Smaller hotspot areas of loss are also observed, such as in eastern Madhya Pradesh around Indore."

"Trees may be missed due to bad image quality. We trust the images from 2018 to 2022, so if a tree was detected in 2010 but not over 2018-2022, there is little uncertainty that it was lost. But not all trees in 2010 were mapped," said Martin Brandt, of the University of Copenhagen and one of the study authors. A plausible reason for large trees being lost was the conversion of farmland to paddy fields.

SC to hear Hemant's plea for interim bail on May 21

The former Jharkhand Chief Minister was arrested by the ED in January; he is seeking relief similar to that granted to Arvind Kejriwal for campaigning, and says he will surrender on June 2

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has decided that it will hear on May 21 a plea by former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren for interim bail to campaign in the ongoing Lok Sabha election.

Appearing before a Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for Mr. Soren, said that his client was willing to surrender on June 2.

Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju, for the Directorate of Enforcement (ED), said that there was no question of granting interim bail for Mr. Soren, who was arrested in January as part of the agency's investigation into money laundering charges linked to a land grab case.

Election appeal: Hemant Soren was arrested by the ED in January on money laundering charges. FILE PHOTO

Similar to Kejriwal case

The relief sought by Mr. Soren is identical to the one given to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who is also facing money laundering charges linked to the liquor policy case. Mr. Kejriwal was arrested on March 21, days after the Model Code of Conduct came into force, and was then granted interim bail by the same Bench of Justices Khanna and Datta on May 10, so that he could campaign for the Aam Aadmi Party in the election. The top court had ordered him to surrender on June 2.

In Mr. Soren's case, the Bench said that relief of interim bail would require the former Jharkhand Chief Minister to *prima facie* satisfy the court that the land in question – which the ED says is the proceeds of the crime – does not belong to him. Mr. Sibal challenged the ED to show proof that the land in question belonged to Mr. Soren. He said that all the ED had were statements to the extent that "some people" were saying "this is Mantri-*ji*'s land".

"That is why we asked whether you [Mr. Soren] are in possession of the land. They have found a person on the land who says it is your land. As soon as the probe began, somebody came up and said that the land is his..." Justice Khanna raised the points put forth by the prosecution against Mr. Soren.

Mr. Sibal said he was keen to address the court on these points. However, Mr. Raju said he would need time to prepare.

The court has listed the case for hearing before a Vacation Bench on May 21. The ED was given time till Monday to submit its reply to Mr. Soren's plea.

Judicial delays

In the previous hearing, Mr. Sibal had said that Mr. Soren's rights were being trampled on. "The High Court had kept the pronouncement of the judgment pending for long. The judgment in my case against my arrest was reserved by the High Court in February. Finally, we had to appeal to the Supreme Court with a petition for interim bail, saying the High Court was not pronouncing its verdict," Mr. Sibal had explained.

The High Court's judgment, on May 3, had refused to quash the case against Mr. Soren while observing that he cannot wriggle out of the "mess" by invoking the spectre of political vendetta.

Not biased against any community, says Manipur government

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Responding to an editorial published in *The Hindu* on May 15 titled "Lame excuses: On Manipur and the ethnic conflict", on the N. Biren Singh-led government's insistence to blame "illegal immigration" for the ongoing ethnic conflict, the Manipur government on Friday doubled down on its position, saying in a press release that the government's drive to identify illegal immigrants had bothered them and this was "one of the reasons for the violence that broke out in Manipur".

In a press release issued by the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), it said, "The Manipur State government is not biased against any ethnic community and identification of illegal immigrants is not limited to only one community. The State has a firm stand on illegal migration, and it has been monitoring the issue as per the directions and instructions of the Central government."

"The immigrants are being provided with basic needs like food grains, water supply, power supply, even roofings and other essential commodities in their respective camps," it said, adding that both the Mizoram and Manipur governments are conducting the deportations only after taking the consent of the refugees and in particular areas where normalcy seems to have returned.

It added that the measures to collect biometric data of illegal immigrants were only taken in February 2023, after a Cabinet sub-committee cleared it.

The DIPR said that alleged illegal immigrants had refused the government's offer of being placed in shelter homes and "it was one of the reasons for the violence that broke out in Manipur".

The State government said that the Cabinet sub-committee had identified a total of 2,187 illegal immigrants in 41 locations of the State, following which in May this year, it had declared that over 5,000 such illegal immigrants had been detected in the Kamjong district. It also cited a letter by Phungyar MLA, Leishiyo Keishing, which claimed that illegal immigrants had started outnumbering local populations in many areas.

Slapped, kicked by CM's aide, says Maliwal; Atishi calls it BJP's ploy to tarnish Kejriwal

Alisha Dutta
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party Rajya Sabha member Swati Maliwal has alleged that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's private secretary Bibhav Kumar slapped her, kicked her in the chest, dragged her and made threats, according to the FIR lodged by the Delhi Police. Commenting on the matter, AAP Minister Atishi said in a press conference on Friday that Ms. Maliwal's allegations were part of a political conspiracy hatched by the BJP.

According to the FIR accessed by *The Hindu*, Ms. Maliwal had gone to the CM's Civil Lines residence to meet him. She tried contacting Mr. Kumar but received no response. Subsequently, she informed the staff about her presence and sat in the drawing room.

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal leaves Delhi Chief Minister's residence at Civil Lines, in New Delhi, on Friday. ANI

The MP alleged that while she was waiting, Mr. Kumar burst into the drawing room and started verbally abusing her. She accused him of slapping her seven or eight times, hitting her on the chest, the stomach and the pelvic region,"unprovoked".

On Friday, Ms. Maliwal was taken to the Chief Minister's residence to "recreate" the crime scene, said a senior police official.

A senior Delhi Police officer told *The Hindu* that they were tracing Mr. Kumar's location and scrutinising the footage of the CCTV cameras installed inside the Chief Minister's residence and collating statements of those who met Ms. Maliwal on the day of the incident.

Video clip

A video clip that has surfaced on the Internet shows Ms. Maliwal in the drawing room of the CM's residence and refusing to leave the premises. She is seen telling the security personnel that she has called 112, and will only leave the premises after the police arrive, and if they still insist on making her leave, then they had better "pick her up and throw her outside the house".

Citing the video clip as evidence, Ms. Atishi said the allegations made by Ms. Maliwal were a part of the BJP's conspiracy to defame the Chief Minister.

"Ever since Arvind Kejriwal has got bail, the BJP is rattled. Due to this, the BJP hatched a conspiracy, under which Swati Maliwal was sent to Arvind Kejriwal's house on the morning of May 13. Swati Maliwal was the face and pawn of this conspiracy," she told reporters.

Ms. Atishi said that though in her complaint Ms. Maliwal had alleged assault, the video clip showed her sitting "comfortably" in the drawing room of the CM's residence. "She was also seen threatening Bibhav Kumar in the video. Her clothes were not torn nor was there any injury on her head as can be seen in the video," she said.

Uttarakhand govt. pledges to combat forest fires

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday recorded the assurance given by Uttarakhand Chief Secretary Radha Raturi that she and her fellow officers were personally looking into efforts to prevent and combat forest fires in the State.

A Bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and Sandeep Mehta asked the Chief Secretary to meet with Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and the court's own *amicus curiae* to work out the modalities to resolve the problem of forest fires.

The Bench had asked the Uttarakhand Chief Secretary to be present in court on May 17 to explain the level of preparedness in the face of forest fires.

Delhi HC quashes its own order in SpiceJet case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday quashed its July 31, 2023 order upholding an arbitral award asking SpiceJet and its promoter Ajay Singh to refund ₹579 crore plus interest to media baron Kalanithi Maran.

The court passed the order on appeals filed by Mr. Singh and SpiceJet challenging the Bench's order. It remanded the matter back to the court to consider the plea challenging the arbitral award afresh.

"... The Section 34 petitions shall in consequence stand restored upon the Board of the appropriate court for being considered afresh and bearing in mind the observations rendered herein above," the Bench said. Section 34 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act deals with applications for setting aside arbitral awards.

We hope India will attend peace meet: Swiss official

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

India has not "determined its attendance" at next month's Ukraine Peace Conference in Switzerland, repeated the Ministry of External Affairs, as Swiss Foreign Secretary Alexandre Fasel met with his counterparts in Delhi for another attempt to secure India's participation.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Fasel said that it was important for Switzerland that India and other emerging economy partners of the BRICS grouping (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa), minus Russia which hasn't been invited, attend the summit, help by conveying messages to Moscow, and play a bigger role at a future peace summit when both Russia and Ukraine are at the table. In the past, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has disclosed that the government has

Alexandre Fasel

played a role in bearing messages to the Kremlin on the Black Sea Grain Initiative and about concerns over nuclear threats.

"India and the fellow BICS [BRICS minus Russia] countries are in the situation where they have good contacts with Russia and also with Western countries. They can act as 'go-betweens' that have the trust of either side," Mr. Fasel, State Secretary of the Swiss Foreign Ministry said.

"They [BICS] will have a determining role when the situation becomes right [to bring Russia and Ukraine to the table together]," he added, pointing out that the Swiss conference, slated in the resort town of Burgenstock on June 15-16, would not work on a peace proposal per se, but build a framework or road map to start peace talks.

New Delhi has made it clear that it will only clarify its participation once the election process is over in the first week of June. On Friday, Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal repeated the stand, saying, "We have received the invitation from the Swiss side, and we are yet to decide on our participation.

Even so, Mr. Fasel said he remained hopeful that New Delhi would respond positively. "I am hopeful because there is this expectation from the international community on one side, and from [Switzerland] bilaterally, that we need India to be there and to contribute."

Excise policy case: ED names Kejriwal, AAP in fresh chargesheet

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday filed the seventh supplementary chargesheet in the money laundering case linked to the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy and named Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) as accused in the case. The party and the AAP chief have been booked under various provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. The chargesheet has mentioned having evidence that the money was sent to AAP via "hawala" channels.

It has also claimed to have found chats between Mr. Kejriwal and "hawala" operators.

The chargesheet was filed in the court of Special Judge (Prevention of Corruption Act) Kaveri Baweja of the Rouse Avenue court, which is scheduled for consideration on Saturday.

This is the first time that Mr. Kejriwal and a political party have been named as accused in the ED's chargesheet in the case.

Party's counter

Reacting to the chargesheet, the AAP said the investigating agency was functioning like a political wing of the BJP.

The AAP said this was the first case in the ED's history that after over two years of investigation, over 500 raids, and filing eight chargesheets, there was not a single rupee of recovery from any of the AAP leaders. The entire case of the ED was built on statements of accused-turned-approvers, all of whom had links to the BJP. Whenever the courts questioned the ED on the veracity of these statements, the agency had no answers, the party claimed.

ELECTIONS 2024

EC pulls up former HC judge over comments

The Election Commission (EC) on Friday issued a show cause notice to former Calcutta High Court judge and BJP candidate Abhijit Gangopadhyay for making offensive comments against West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

The EC said the comments made by Mr. Gangopadhyay were found to be "improper, injudicious, beyond dignity in every sense of the term, in bad taste and *prima facie* violative" of the provisions of the Model Code of Conduct.

The notice also reminded Mr. Gangopadhyay about the EC's recent advisory, which said that political parties and candidates should refrain from any deeds or action or utterances that may be construed as being repugnant to the honour and dignity of women.

Abhijit Gangopadhyay is the BJP candidate from Tamluk in West Bengal. ANI

JMM suspends Sita Soren, another MLA

Taking disciplinary action against rebel leaders, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) chief Shibu Soren on Friday suspended two party MLAs for six years each.

Mr. Soren suspended his daughter-in-law Sita Soren, MLA from the Jama Assembly seat, and Borio MLA Lobin Hembrom.

The action was taken after Mr. Hembrom made a formal announcement to contest the Lok Sabha election as an Independent candidate against the party candidate from Rajmahal seat, whereas Ms. Sita Soren, who had quit the JMM and joined the BJP last month, is contesting the Lok Sabha polls from Dumka seat against JMM candidate Nalin Soren.

Ms. Sita Soren had been holding the post of central general secretary in the party.

> In a democracy... if you want to take revenge for the cruelties done to you, it can be taken through a vote
>
> **MEHBOOBA MUFTI**
> PDP chief

Cong. moves EC against Mohan Yadav's remark

The Madhya Pradesh Congress has lodged a complaint with the Election Commission (EC) against Chief Minister Mohan Yadav's alleged use of an offensive word for the party, and sought that he be banned from election campaigning immediately. PTI

> The BJP that has split two parties in Maharashtra is the 'tukde tukde gang', and people have not liked this
>
> **PAWAN KHERA**
> Congress leader

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and BJP Gorakhpur candidate Ravi Kishan greet supporters during a public meeting in the constituency. ANI

BJP banking on Hindutva pull amid discontent in Gorakhpur

Sobhana K. Nair
GORAKHPUR

For over three decades, the Gorakhpur Lok Sabha seat has been a BJP bastion, with its Hindutva pull centred around the Gorakhnath Math. In a brief interlude, the Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party combine had emerged victorious in the 2018 byelection, thanks to its superior caste arithmetic. Six years later, the SP-Congress alliance is hoping to repeat this success, amid discontent fuelled by inflation and unemployment, fatigue with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reign, and BSP voters looking beyond their traditional choice.

The incumbent MP of Gorakhpur, BJP's Ravi Kishan, is once again in the fray. He faces the Samajwadi Party's Kajal Nishad, who has been unsuccessfully contesting elections since 2012. Both have a foot in the entertainment industry – Ms. Nishad is a TV actor and Mr. Kishan, a Bhojpuri superstar, has earned acclaim for his recent roles in *Mamla Legal Hai* and *Laapataa Ladies*. The commonalities end here though. The two are running campaigns that are starkly different in tone, tenor, and scale.

The campaign trails

Rows of red plastic chairs dot the small ground between a railway line and a residential colony in Nandanagar, where the stage is set by a three-member band playing a mix of devotional and BJP campaign songs. Mr. Kishan arrives 90 minutes late. The crowd that had been standing indifferently on the margins surges ahead and the excitement is feverish. Once the chaos settles, Mr. Kishan starts speaking. In his baritone voice, further accentuated by the background music, he extols the governments of Mr. Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, mahant of the Gorakhnath Math and a five-time Gorakhpur MP. Whipping the audience into a frenzy, he asserts that India woke up after 2014 and reduced Pakistan to a "leashed dog".

Almost 20 km away, in a relatively bucolic setting, Mr. Kishan's opponent, SP's Kajal Nishad, hobbles out of her SUV. The venue is a vacant land next to the village temple flanked by a cattle shed. "The *roti* cooked only on one side could burn or end up being half-cooked," she speaks directly to the women. The government, similarly, has to be changed every now and then, she says, underlining that the region has not benefited despite the uniformity in the ruling regime – its MP, the Chief Minister, and the Prime Minister are all from the BJP. "This is a an election between *janata* [people] and *satta* [government]," Ms. Nishaad reminds her voters.

However, it is not that straightforward a choice for Gorakhpur voters. Ram Mandir may not be a factor here in this election. Awdesh Paswan, a resident, nods along as his friend Prem Chand Paswan lists out the "broken promises" of the BJP government in Delhi. "Mr. Modi came to power promising to remove poverty and instead in the past 10 years, he has been working to remove the poor," Mr. Chand says.

Ramesh Nishaad had a litany of complaints – from high prices and shrinking employment opportunities to increased privatisation – underscoring the considerable challenge before the BJP.

Congress hits back at Modi over remark on 'bulldozer'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday asked the Congress to learn from Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on "where to run bulldozer", the Congress hit back by saying that the Chief Minister's "bulldozer" is against reservation for Dalits, tribals, and backward classes.

Addressing a rally, Mr. Modi had alleged that the Congress and Samajwadi Party would run a bulldozer over the Ram Temple if elected to power and asked them to take "tuition from Yogi Adityanath on where to run bulldozers".

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh took to X and cited an article on Mr. Adityanath's website to claim that it reflected the RSS's anti-reservation mindset. "The 'outgoing' Prime Minister today said that the INDIA *Janbandhan* should learn from Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on where to run the 'bulldozer'. See how Mr. Adityanath's 'bulldozer' is against the reservation system for Dalits, tribals, and backward classes! The Prime Minister should clearly say that he is supporting Mr. Adityanath because of his views on reservation," he said.

CAA, industries shape Bengal's election discourse in fifth phase

Seven constituencies across three districts will go to the polls on May 20; in 2019, the Trinamool won four of these seats and the BJP bagged three, including Bongaon, the hotbed of the Matua movement seeking citizenship under the new Act

OVERVIEW

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and a lacklustre industrial climate along the banks of the Hooghly river could be issues that dominate polling in the fifth phase of the Lok Sabha election in West Bengal on May 20.

Bongaon and Barrackpore in North 24 Parganas district; Sreerampur, Hooghly and Arambagh in Hooghly district; and Howrah and Uluberia in Howrah district will vote in this phase as the poll caravan reaches the fringes of Kolkata.

In 2019, the BJP had won Bongaon, Barrackpore, and Hooghly, while the Trinamool Congress won Howrah, Uluberia, Sreerampur, and Arambagh. While Barrackpore, Howrah, and Sreerampur are urban constituencies, Bongaon, Arambagh, Hooghy, and Uluberia are primarily rural.

Bordering Bangladesh, Bongaon has been the hotbed of a movement by the Matua community demanding citizenship under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA).

On March 11, the Union Home Ministry notified Rules for the CAA so that the Matuas could apply for citizenship. Even though there has not been much enthusiasm among people to apply for citizenship, the CAA has dominated politics in Bongaon and south Bengal.

In this constituency, Union Minister of State and BJP MP Shantanu Thakur is seeking re-election and is pitted against Trinamool candidate Biswajit Das. Mr. Thakur hails from the family of the founders of the Matua sect. Mr. Das had won the Assembly election in 2021 on BJP ticket and later defected to the Trinamool.

The CAA has been raised during campaigning by the BJP leadership, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah who have accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of trying to obstruct its implementation. The Trinamool leadership has dubbed the CAA as anti-minority and has said that Matuas are citizens and there is no need for new citizenship.

In the jute hub of past

The adjoining constituency of Barrackpore is witnessing a contest between Arjun Singh, who switched to the BJP after being denied ticket by the Trinamool, and State Minister Partha Bhowmick. Mr. Singh, who has the highest number of criminal cases, 93, among candidates contesting the election in West Bengal, has an influence over jute mills in Barrackpore.

Like Barrackpore, Sreerampur and Howrah are located by the Hooghly and had once been the hub of jute mills and small manufacturing units.

Hooghly, which had become synonymous with the protest against forcible land acquisition for Tata Motors' small car factory in Singur during the Left Front regime, will see a fight between two actors-turned-politicians – the BJP's Locket Chatterjee and the Trinamool's Rachana Banerjee. Ms. Chatterjee was elected from the seat in 2019 and even 15 years after the Tatas pulled out of Singur, she is promising industrial development. Ms. Banerjee claims that "smoke from chimneys" can be seen in the constituency, which means the factories are running, and credits the Trinamool for that. Trinamool heavyweights Kalyan Banerjee, from Sreerampur, and footballer-turned-politician Prasun Banerjee, from Howrah, are also in the fray.

Cong.-Left alliance

The candidates of the Left parties and the Congress have put up an energetic campaign across these seven seats. The Congress has fielded candidates in three constituencies, and the CPI(M) is contesting from four.

Of the 88 candidates in the fray, 14 are women.

The fourth phase of voting in the State witnessed isolated incidents of violence and the Election Commission plans to deploy 650 companies of Central forces, more than the previous phase, this time.

Past results

A look at the 2019 Lok Sabha election winners and runners-up for the seven seats from West Bengal going to the polls on May 20, along with their vote shares

Constituency	Winner	Vote share (%)	Runner-up	Vote share (%)
Arambagh	AITC	44.15	BJP	44.08
Barrackpore	BJP	48.85	AITC	40.92
Bongaon	BJP	42.82	AITC	41.48
Hooghly	BJP	46.06	AITC	41.03
Howrah	AITC	47.18	BJP	38.7
Sreerampur	AITC	45.5	BJP	38.47
Uluberia	AITC	53	BJP	36.58

Congress seeks to protect Rae Bareli bastion, eyes bigger victory margin with SP on its side

Mayank Kumar
RAE BARELI

The dusty intersections of roads in Rae Bareli have been busy spots over the past 10 days as they are the venues for a slew of small election rallies, according to Saurabh Shah, a resident of Sarain Hardo village in the Uttar Pradesh constituency. "This poll campaign may stand out as it is localised outreach with smaller meetings mostly by Congress," says Mr. Shah, a BA graduate, as he sips tea at a roadside stall.

Rae Bareli is the only parliamentary seat that the Congress won in the country's largest State in the 2019 Lok Sabha election, and is considered one of the party's safest seats in the Hindi heartland. Rae Bareli's voters have voted in a Congress candidate in 17 of the 20 Lok Sabha elections held here since Independence, including by-polls. This time, it is garnering extra buzz as Congress workers from across the country are here bolstering support for the party's nominee, Rahul Gandhi, with his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra leading from the front.

High on hope: Congress strategists believe that the caste and social arithmetic in the Lok Sabha constituency, along with the support of Samajwadi Party cadre, will benefit the party. PTI

"Rae Bareli has a tradition of politics for *seva* [service]. Indira Gandhi*ji* and Sonia Gandhi*ji* served you, worked for the area's progress. We have many decades-old ties with the people of Rae Bareli," Ms. Vadra says, addressing a *jan sampark* meeting in the Sareni Assembly segment.

The former U.P. Congress in-charge is doing at least 10 such meetings daily, aiming to strengthen bonds with the voters through a personal touch. Ms. Vadra has stationed herself in Rae Bareli for more than a week, though she is also handling campaigning in neighbouring Amethi, also a former family stronghold that was breached five years ago when Mr. Gandhi lost the seat to the BJP's Smriti Irani.

The factors in play

"We are sure of registering a landslide victory, the margin in Rae Bareli will be among the highest not only in U.P. but across India," says Anil Yadav, U.P. Congress general secretary. Congress strategists believe that the caste and social arithmetic in the Lok Sabha constituency will benefit the party, with two additional factors – the coordination with the local cadre of the Samajwadi Party, and the traditional Brahmin-Rajput social fault lines – also working in the Congress's favour.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah campaigned in Rae Bareli for the BJP candidate, Dinesh Pratap Singh, and headed to local Samajwadi Party MLA Manoj Pandey's residence after the rally. In February, Mr. Pandey resigned from the post of the SP chief whip in the U.P. Assembly and cross-voted in favour of the BJP candidate in the recent Rajya Sabha election. He is considered an influential Brahmin leader in Rae Bareli, where Brahmins constitute about 11% of the electorate and have traditionally supported the Congress.

"The social fault lines may not be visible, but it might come into play," says Vikas Pandey, a local resident. Scheduled Caste (SC) communities account for about 30% of the electorate, while Yadavs account for 9% of voters. About 12% are Muslims, while 11% are Rajputs.

Of the five Assembly seats in the constituency – Bachhrawan, Harchandpur, Sareni, Unchahar, and Rae Bareli – the SP won the first four in the 2022 Assembly election. Though Mr. Pandey has now switched loyalties, the remaining three SP MLAs have been campaigning for Mr. Gandhi.

In most of her speeches, Ms. Vadra targets the BJP's candidate, Mr. Singh, for spreading terror in the district. "Today, the BJP has fielded such a candidate who scares the people, spreads terror. You have to decide what kind of MP you want," she says at a meeting in Unchahar.

'Will not run away'

Mr. Singh, who had an earlier stint in the Congress, contested the 2019 Lok Sabha election against former Congress president Sonia Gandhi and lost by about 1,67,000 votes. Ms. Gandhi, who represented the seat for about two decades, polled 5,34,918 votes (55.80%) against the BJP nominee, who polled 3,67,740 (38.36%) votes.

The BJP campaign is focused on the Congress candidate, Mr. Gandhi, who has also contested the Lok Sabha election from Wayanad in Kerala. Mr. Singh vows not to leave Rae Bareli till his death. "Come what may I will not leave Rae Bareli, unlike the opponent who ran away to Wayanad after defeat," he says.

Handing over my son to you: Sonia at rally in Rae Bareli

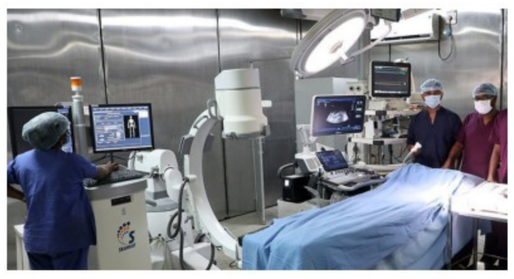
Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Congress leader Sonia Gandhi on Friday said she was handing over her son Rahul Gandhi to the people of Rae Bareli and added that they would not be disappointed with him. "I am handing over my son to you. Rahul will not disappoint you," Ms. Gandhi said at a public meeting in Rae Bareli.

The former Congress president, who addressed the gathering with her son and daughter Priyanka Gandhi Vadra standing by her side, highlighted the century-old ties that the Congress and the Gandhi family shared with the constituency, adding that Rae Bareli had always shown the way to the country and had made an invaluable contribution in strengthening democracy.

Speaking before his mother at the rally, Mr. Gandhi said the people of India, particularly the youth from across the nation, had made up their mind that they did not want a BJP government and asserted that an INDIA bloc government would be formed after June 4.

INBRIEF



Report side effects of medical devices on time, says DCGI

The DCGI has called for timely reporting of adverse events related to medical devices and directed all licence holders and manufacturers to report any adverse events related to life-saving equipment on the Materiovigilance Programme of India platform. In its circular, the regulator said that the post-market surveillance (PMS) of medical devices is one of the important aspects to ensure safety and performance of the medical devices. "Timely reporting of the adverse events allows for the identifiable risks, analysing frequency of identified risks and enabling the manufacturers and authorities to take appropriate measures to mitigate risks and safeguard public health," it said.

No rice for poor in Manipur hill districts: rights group

The nexus between the officials and the transport contractors has deprived the poor in at least two tribal hill districts of Manipur of rice under a Prime Minister's scheme for months, a rights group has told Chief Minister N. Biren Singh. The Movement for People's Rights Forum, Manipur, on Friday sought the Chief Minister's intervention against the "unlawful conduct" of officials and a few contractors for paralysing the monthly rice distribution system under the PMGKAY to hundreds of beneficiaries across the hills of the ethnic violence-scarred State. The districts worst affected are Noney and Tamenglong, the forum said.

'Naveen *babu* does not need BJP to form govt.'

BJD leader targets the BJP government at the Centre, asking what it has done to support Odisha's language, culture, leaders, and economy; he says the BJP's poll promises will push back Odisha by 25 years as he defends the BJD's promise of providing free power to 90% households in the State

INTERVIEW

V.K. Pandian

Nistula Hebbar

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leader and 5T chairman V.K. Pandian says his party's election promise of free power to 90% households in Odisha has sound financial reasoning backing it. He says what has shocked him is the BJP's poll promise of a ₹50,000 "voucher" for two crore women in the State. The former bureaucrat says the people of Odisha would decide on the "outsider" tag given to him. Excerpts:

The BJP is making much of its plank of *Odia Asmita*, or Odia pride, with references to the fact that you are not an Odia.

It's the people who have to decide who is an outsider. I heard my inner call and took the plunge. Also, a State or region's pride is decided upon four or five things, number one being language. In March 2014, the then UPA government, after persuasion by Naveen *babu* [Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik], declared Odia as a classical language just before the polls. But 10 years of the NDA government has not seen anything in terms of promotion of the Odia language, whereas they have done it for Telugu, Sanskrit, Tamil, etc. Second, Mr. Patnaik had moved a proposal requesting that Odissi music be given the tag of classical music. The Union government did not respond.

Thirdly, a region's identity is also reflected in how you honour the leaders of that State. Biju *babu* [late Chief Minister Biju Patnaik] is one the tallest leaders not just in the country but also internationally. When he passed away, flags of four countries were laid on his body, including from Indonesia, where he had rescued freedom fighters in his plane in 1947. His contribution to India as a country is huge, whether it be preventing Indonesia from deploying their Naval units during the Bangladesh war, or instituting an international award for the popularisation of science. He is the father of modern Odisha, making it one of India's most progressive States. The BJP has given Bharat Ratna to many people, and without going into those who have been awarded, they couldn't find anyone from Odisha?

PTI

Just before elections, after 10 years of somnolence, you wake up and talk of these things?

The fourth aspect of regional pride is seen in how you also treat a State. From 2004, we are fighting for coal royalty revisions; that has not been done. The MCL [Mahanadi Coalfields], which is a CPSU [Central public sector unit], earns about ₹27,000 crore from Odisha and contributes only ₹4,000 crore to the [State] exchequer. What have you done for that? We have asked that, just for disaster management, Odisha, due to its geographical location, needs to be given special status, but there has only been silence.

The BJP and the BJD were in talks for an electoral alliance. What happened?

To be honest, it is a talk between two leaders, to do something substantial for the State and the country. Naveen *babu* does not need the BJP to form a government and perhaps the BJP also does not need Naveen *babu*'s support.

What is the guru mantra that Mr. Patnaik has imparted to you in terms of public life?

Keep your ears close to the ground, and keep your heart in the right place, with the interests of the people.

You are made out to be this Machiavellian character behind Mr. Patnaik, guiding his hand. How do you deal with such characterisation?

I am used to it. That is something the Opposition has been doing for a long time against the Chief Minister. From 2000 to 2004, they did against someone else; from 2004 to 2011 they hit Pyari *babu* [Pyari Mohan Mohapatra], but they miss out on the larger point of Naveen *babu*'s presence. This helps Naveen *babu* also, and I am happy to be the fall guy if that is the case.

Your party has maintained equidistance from the BJP and the Congress-led Opposition. After the polls, would you be open to support either formation if called to?

Right now we are in the middle of the elections and these are hypothetical questions that need not be answered.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made a sharp attack against Mr. Patnaik in the past week. That seems unusual.

Mr. Modi said his party would take oath on June 10. We found the actual auspicious date and have announced June 9 as the date for the swearing-in of Naveen *babu*. In 2019, Mr. Modi had used the word "farewell", and this time he used the word "expiry date"; Naveen *babu* won then and he will be taking oath again this time.

There have been accusations that the BJD is also going the freebie way with the free electricity promise.

The Odisha government has the financial cushion to promise free power. For me, it is shocking the way the BJP has promised freebies, despite declaring they are against the freebie culture. They have announced a funny scheme for Odisha in their manifesto, that they will come up with a ₹50,000 "voucher" for two crore women. First of all, what is a voucher? We are not running a shopping mall. Plus, the outlay for this would be ₹1 lakh crore when your total budget is ₹2 lakh crore! It's a mockery of developmental economics. The BJP's plans will push back Odisha by 25 years.

The BJD has promised free electricity for 90% of households. Looking at our revenue surplus of ₹25,000 crore, Odisha being one of the few States with a revenue surplus, we will take a hit of only ₹2,000 crore on this scheme.

(Full interview at bit.ly/vkpandian)

Modi, INDIA bloc leaders trade barbs at Mumbai rallies

Abhinay Deshpande
MUMBAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and leaders of the INDIA bloc, including Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, engaged in a showdown in Mumbai on Friday ahead of the city heading to the polls on May 20.

They exchanged barbs over corruption, Hindutva, the 'real' Shiv Sena, Article 370, and the Constitution.

Mr. Modi, addressing a packed gathering at the Shivaji Park in Dadar, said Mumbai was going to play a 'huge role' in the mission of *Viksit Bharat* by 2047. He alleged that the previous Maha Vikas Aghadi government halted all development projects in Mumbai, including the bullet train, Mumbai Metro,

Uddhav Thackeray

and the container terminal at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust. "They were taking revenge from Mumbai. Modi has come here to give what Mumbai deserves," the Prime Minister said.

Mr. Modi said he had a 10-year report card and a 25-year road map, while the INDIA bloc had nothing but as many Prime Ministerial candidates as the number of partners in the alliance.

The Congress, he said, was fighting a battle for survival and could go to any extent to save itself. "Its Maoist manifesto is eyeing gold from temples and the mangalsutra of women. It plans a 50% inheritance tax...," Mr. Modi said.

Mr. Thackeray, who addressed a rally at the B.K.C. Grounds, hit back, saying this was the first election where Mr. Modi was not finding direction for his campaign. He said Friday's speech was Mr. Modi's "last speech as Prime Minister in Mumbai". "On June 4, the country will be de-Modified," he said.

Mr. Kharge said there was an undercurrent against the Modi government due to which Mr. Modi was afraid.

Mr. Kejriwal said if Mr. Modi won, he would put Opposition leaders behind bars. He accused Mr. Modi of finishing the political careers of several BJP leaders, including Devendra Fadnavis, Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Vasundhara Raje.

All eyes on Naveen Patnaik in Odisha second phase

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

After a calm initial phase of election in Odisha, the State has entered a more intense phase, with both the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) competing fiercely as five Lok Sabha seats and 35 Assembly seats go to the polls on May 20.

The prominent contenders in the second phase include Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, former Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram, former Indian hockey captain Dilip Tirkey, former Union Minister and hotelier Dilip Ray, and BJP's four-time Lok Sabha member Sangeeta Singh Deo.

As many as 40 candidates are contesting from five Lok Sabha seats, while 265 candidates are in the fray for 35 Assembly seats.

The five Lok Sabha seats for which voting will take place are Aska, Kandhamal, Balangir, Bargarh and Sundargarh. While the BJD had won Aska and Kandhamal, the rest had gone to the BJP in 2019. As the electoral fight appears to be closer this election, both parties have resorted to man-to-man marking.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik with BJD candidates at a public meeting in Deogarh district on May 15. PTI

Pre-poll violence

The pre-poll violence in Ganjam, Mr. Patnaik's home district, that left one BJP supporter dead and the assault on the BJP's Berhampur Lok Sabha candidate, Pradeep Panigrahy, forced the Chief Electoral Officer to send 20 companies of Central armed police force to the district.

The BJP appears to firing on all cylinders by deploying its Central leadership. The Chief Ministers of BJP-ruled States such as Assam, Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan are addressing marathon public meetings in the State on Friday. Union Home Minister Amit Shah is touring Rourkela.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and BJP MP Hema Malini are also in the State seeking support for their party candidates.

BJD's star campaigners

The State BJD had submitted a list of star campaigners. However, most public rallies are being addressed by Mr. Patnaik and his close aide V.K. Pandian. Similarly, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Wayanad MP Rahul Gandhi had addressed two meetings in Kandhamal and Balangir.

Mr. Patnaik is running for re-election from his long-time Assembly constituency of Hinjili and the newly selected Kantabanji constituency.

By choosing Kantabanji, a key transit point for family migration, he has brought significant attention to this issue in the election. Consequently, migration and unemployment have become the most discussed topics in this phase.

If Mr. Patnaik wins and his party goes on to form the government, he will become Chief Minister for the sixth straight time. He will also become the longest-serving Chief Minister in the country in the next few months.

The personal attack on each other's leadership dominated the campaign in the run-up to the second phase, putting issues like price rise and underdevelopment on the back burner.

The phase is particularly important for the BJP as the saffron party wants to retain the seats of Bargarh, Balangir, and Sundargarh in order to improve its tally in the State.

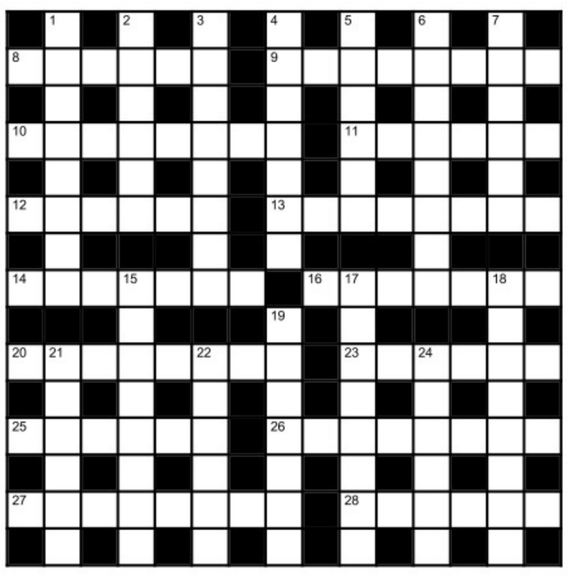
The Odisha police and the paramilitary forces are keeping close watch on the Kandhamal Lok Sabha seat which had witnessed left-wing extremist activities during the past couple of years.

TH CROSSWORD + 14178

(set by Vidwan)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

8 Durga fidgeted with a divine vehicle (6)
9 You'll meet kindred regularly for Christmas (8)
10 Stick used by someone with a handicap? Of course! (4,4)
11 One from Warsaw or Japan, say (6)
12 Instrument - playing, lovin' it endlessly! (6)
13 Excels in non-clandestine operations (8)
14 Filthy male in distressed surrounding (7)
16 Rebel princess' honour? Yes! (7)
20 Active at a bull's early stage of embryo (8)
23 Quietly come to lecture (6)
25 Season's special band! (6)
26 Hot atmosphere diminishes main source of income for barbers (8)
27 How an archer submits? (4,4)
28 Son going into 'lazy' position (6)

Down

1 Works in so calm style with brevity of speech (8)
2 Idiot changed sides for a large bag (6)
3 Standard kind of clean language (8)
4 Do we bore you at start? You may raise this for disapproval! (7)
5 Slip away, asleep, drunk! (6)
6 Street toilet somehow improves women's stature (8)
7 A darling daughter stumps, occasionally makes sense! (4,2)
15 As basic as erroneously missing a Cartesian coordinate of a point (8)
17 I am power - legitimate and absolute! (8)
18 Create ET perhaps and rest (2,6)
19 Half of Manhattan, regularly turns to organised search for fugitives (7)
21 Mostly Apple redesigning confines to a computing device (6)
22 Motivate headless doctor in operating room (4,2)
24 Free poor substitute (6)

SUDOKU

		3	1	4				5
					2		3	9
9	8		5				4	
1	6	8						
						6	1	4
	9				5		6	7
4	3		8					
2				1	4	9		

No.SS6162 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

	R		A		C				G		O		B	
B	E	S	M	I	R	C	H		O	S	P	R	E	Y
	F		O		E		A		T		A		E	
L	O	O	K		A	N	N	I	H	I	L	A	T	E
	R				M		G		I		E		R	
A	M	I	D	S	T		B	A	C	K	S	T	O	P
			I		E		Y				C		O	
	M	I	S	M	A	N	A	G	E	M	E	N	T	
	A		A				T		L		N			
S	L	A	P	D	A	S	H		E	X	T	E	N	T
	I		P		V		R		C				O	
I	N	C	O	H	E	R	E	N	T		H	A	T	E
	G		I		R		A		I		U		I	
T	E	N	N	I	S		D	R	O	P	S	H	O	T
	R		T		E				N		H		N	

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

2	8	6	9	7	1	4	3	5
3	1	5	6	2	4	8	9	7
9	7	4	5	3	8	1	2	6
6	2	3	1	8	5	9	7	4
8	5	1	4	9	7	2	6	3
4	9	7	3	6	2	5	8	1
5	3	8	7	4	9	6	1	2
1	6	9	2	5	3	7	4	8
7	4	2	8	1	6	3	5	9

FAITH

The mature stage of yoga

Mind is the root cause of all our actions. A well-controlled mind will achieve self-realisation. Valayapettai Sri Ramachariar said in a discourse that two terms, '*Sanchalam*' and '*Asthiram*', are referred to in Sri Bhagavad Gita Chapter VI sloka 26. "*Yato Yato Nischarathi Manas sanchalam asthiram*".

It denotes that the mind is fickle and unsteady and will not stay in anything, including '*Aatman*'. When the wind blows, a lamp will flicker and will not glow.

The subdued mind of a person who practices yoga should be like a lamp that does not flicker in a windless place.

One who fixes his mind in self-realisation will wipe out his sins. When sins are eliminated, the *Rajas* and *Thamas* (mental darkness and ignorance) qualities in him will diminish.

In verses 29 to 32 in Chapter VI, Sri Krishna explains to Arjuna the mature stage of yoga, which consists of four degrees: He whose mind is fixed in yoga sees equality everywhere; To that person who sees God in every self and every self in God – the Lord says that He is not lost to him; The yogi who worships fixing his mind in oneness abides in Him; He who sees the similarity of selves and sees the pleasure and pain as the same is deemed as the highest.

INBRIEF

IFC extends $500 mn to HDFC Bank for microloans to women

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has provided a $500-million loan to HDFC Bank for extending microloans to "underserved women". HDFC Bank said it would use the funds for on-lending to SHGs and joint liability groups enrolled in the Sustainable Livelihoods Initiative. "IFC aims to promote greater inclusiveness of underserved women borrowers by scaling up microlending to this segment," said Imad Fakhoury, IFC's Regional Director for South Asia.

Zydus, MSN partner to make, market cancer drug for U.S.

Drugmakers Zydus Lifesciences and Hyderabad-based MSN Laboratories have entered into an exclusive licensing and supply agreement for Cabozantinib Tablets, a generic version of cancer drug Cabometyx, for the U.S. market. Under the agreement, MSN will be in charge of manufacturing and supplying the generic version, following the receipt of regulatory approval, while Zydus will exclusively market, distribute and sell the product in the U.S.

Wipro COO Amit quits, IT firm names Sanjeev his successor

Wipro's chief operating officer Amit Choudhary has stepped down to pursue opportunities outside the organisation. The IT major on Friday announced the appointment of Sanjeev Jain as the new COO effective immediately. Mr. Jain joined Wipro in 2023 as the Global Head of Business Operations. He brings in over 30 years of experience in leading large, diverse teams, scaling up global operations, and deploying Lean Six Sigma and design thinking principles.

Manufacturing in India needs more sophistication: FM

Nirmala Sitharaman said India's demographic dividend with the lowest dependency ratio will bolster consumption; highlights opportunities

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Indian manufacturing must develop greater sophistication in its products and the government will find ways to provide policy support in this endeavour, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Friday, dismissing "some economists' advice that India should no longer look to ramp up manufacturing."

"Manufacturing must increase, and with the help of policies, India must increase its share in manufacturing and global value chains," Ms. Sitharaman said, adding that this will also help India be more self-reliant. Citing a recent Capgemini Research Institute report, the Minister said 65% of almost 760 senior executives surveyed in the U.S. and Europe were planning to increase manufacturing investments significantly in India, with an eye on reducing their dependence on China.

Addressing the annual business summit of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Ms. Sitharaman also pointed to an S&P Global Market Intelligence assessment that the Indian market could throw up trillions of dollars of opportunities by 2031, with the consumer market expected to double by then.

CII summit: Ms. Sitharaman ascribes India's high growth to "policy stability" at the CII's Annual Business Summit in New Delhi. ANI

While the consumer market presents a $2.9 trillion opportunity, spending on food is expected to rise to $1.4 trillion while financial services will climb to $670 billion by 2031, which together would create another $1.39 trillion of opportunities, the Minister said, citing the S&P report.

'Ramping up skilling'

"Skilling is really being ramped up in India so the demographic dividend, which will persist for the next 30 years [and] comes with an added advantage of a historically lowest dependency ratio, means the net benefit is going to be towards more increase in consumption," she said. She emphasised that investments and expansion plans to tap these opportunities can help push faster economic growth, especially with bank and corporate balance sheets "in the pink of health".

Ascribing India's consistent high growth to "policy stability, absence of flip-flops, corruption-free decision-making" combined with "facilitation in legislative and legal frameworks" based on industry feedback for rapid changes in the compliance regime, Ms. Sitharaman said the government looks at the private sector as a partner in development while acting as a facilitator.

"We are confident Prime Minister Narendra Modi is coming back with a good majority. Soon after the government is formed, we look forward to a more pointed engagement with the CII to see what best can be done in the July budget, which will be the full year Budget," she said.

Panagariya pitches for job-intensive investments in India

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Making a strong case for more labour-intensive industries in sectors like apparel and footwear to reduce the concentration of low-productivity employment in agriculture, Sixteenth Finance Commission chairman Arvind Panagariya said that India's preference for businesses that depend on capital or skilled-labour was a legacy from the "Nehru era".

Noting that 45% of India's workforce is still employed in agriculture which produces about 15% of the GDP, he said there was a historical reason behind India's successful industries being in sectors like IT and petroleum refining. Wage costs account for just 4% of total costs in the auto industry and that, he said, was very typical of Indian industry.

"The focus generally in our intellectual thinking... and that goes all the way back to the Nehru era, that we started off with steel mills, machinery industries... and that kind of industrialisation got hardwired at all levels if you look at the political class, the bureaucracy and the businessmen," he said at a CII summit on Friday.

Start-ups sign up with ONDC as volumes exceed 7 mn a month

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

ONDC Ltd., which operates the Open Network for Digital Commerce, has signed letters of intent with 125 start-ups, including EaseMyTrip, Livspace, Pristyn Care, Cars24, and PolicyBazaar, who have all committed to join the platform.

ONDC is an effort promoted by the government, but run 'semi-privately' in a consortium mode, to unbundle the e-commerce value chain, by making logistics providers, sellers and discovery platforms compete with each other for a place in any given transaction.

The modalities of the 125 start-ups have not yet been ironed out, but founders expressed optimism that the "synergy" between ONDC and the Startup India programme will lead to more participation.

"We will see what we can do about market concentration," Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh told mediapersons.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	FRIDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	73,917	0.34
US Dollar	83.37	0.15
Gold	73,900	-0.20
Brent oil	83.37	0.36

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3060.50	18.85
Adani Ports	1335.70	-9.35
Apollo Hosp	5953.05	21.35
Asian Paints	2809.90	-4.15
Axis Bank	1141.35	2.05
Bajaj Auto	8780.70	-91.15
Bajaj Finserv	1584.75	-11.25
Bajaj Finance	6727.40	-19.75
Bharti Airtel	1344.45	-0.65
BPCL	628.30	9.55
Britannia Ind	5086.80	-50.95
Cipla	1399.05	-22.05
Coal India	470.25	1.95
Divis Lab	3910.75	-20.40
Dr Reddys Lab	5799.55	-50.85
Eicher Motors	4693.90	12.15
Grasim Ind	2423.65	51.05
HCL Tech	1333.20	-14.95
HDFC Bank	1464.10	3.85
HDFC Life	570.20	3.15
Hero MotoCorp	5089.20	-52.15
Hindalco	655.45	2.10
Hind Unilever	2320.35	-22.80
ICICI Bank	1130.50	-0.55
IndusInd Bank	1412.35	3.60
Infosys	1444.30	-9.05
ITC	436.30	4.85
JSW Steel	907.45	21.05
Kotak Bank	1696.55	24.50
L&T	3450.75	-9.85
LTIMindtree Ltd.	4764.30	-6.90
M&M	2514.60	142.85
Maruti Suzuki	12641.50	143.85
NestleIndia	2445.50	-22.85
NTPC	365.45	4.00
ONGC	277.45	-0.20
PowerGrid Corp	313.15	0.65
Reliance Ind	2871.40	20.70
SBI Life	1434.20	-18.00
State Bank	817.85	5.90
Shriram Finance Ltd.	2371.60	32.90
Sun Pharma	1531.40	-4.90
TataConsumerProduct	1095.20	-4.55
Tata Motors	945.70	9.30
Tata Steel	167.35	1.45
TCS	3834.10	-66.85
Tech Mahindra	1305.40	-2.55
Titan	3361.15	27.25
UltraTech Cement	9890.35	181.25
Wipro	461.00	-3.45

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on May 17

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	83.14	83.46
Euro	90.13	90.48
British Pound	105.20	105.61
Japanese Yen (100)	53.34	53.55
Chinese Yuan	11.50	11.55
Swiss Franc	91.41	91.76
Singapore Dollar	61.69	61.94
Canadian Dollar	60.95	61.18
Malaysian Ringitt	17.73	17.81
Australian Dollar	55.30	55.52

Source:Indian Bank

Keeping close watch on steel imports, says SAIL Chairman

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India became a net steel importer in FY24, with a 38% surge in imports at 8.319 million tonnes

SAIL, the country's largest steel maker is closely watching imports of the commodity, the firm's Chairman Amarendu Prakash said on Friday.

Mr. Prakash was replying to questions on the impact of the U.S.'s tariffs on Chinese items like electric vehicles, batteries, steel, and aluminium.

"We are keenly watching imports," Praksh told PTI at a workshop on 'Forging Sustainability in Steel Sector' organised by the Ministry of Steel.

Recently, Tata Steel CEO T.V. Narendran had also voiced concern over rising steel imports.

Official figures show India reported a 38% surge in steel imports to 8.319 million tonnes, becoming a net importer in FY24.

Steelmakers have raised concerns on rising imports from some countries, mainly China and sought the Centre's intervention.

Domestic players have also demanded curbs on imports and a review of free trade agreements with several countries.

'Creditors realised only 4% of claims under IBC process'

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Only 17% yielded a resolution plan with the remaining cases withdrawn post National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) admission as on March 31, and liquidation for 960 corporate debtors were completed where creditors realised only 4% of their total admitted claims under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), ICRA said in a study.

The NCLT approved a record 269 resolution plans under the IBC in FY24, surpassing FY23 record of 189 cases, but the rise in average duration of the resolution process has caused worries, ICRA said.

Creditor claims of ₹1.7 lakh crore were resolved through resolution plan approvals in FY24 against ₹1.5 lakh crore in FY23 and haircut by lenders rose to 73% from 64%, it added.

Average duration to close Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) rose to 843 days in FY24. The number of CIRPs closed through liquidation orders continued to outpace those yielding a resolution plan, ICRA said.

Abhishek Dafria, Group Head, Structured Finance Ratings at ICRA, said, "We continue to find creditors approaching the NCLT to admit a defaulting debtor with substantial delays."

RBI Deputy Governors flag supervisory concerns at asset reconstruction firms

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Amid various allegations of their indulgence in unethical practices, including providing backdoor entry to defaulting promoters of insolvent companies, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday asked top bosses of asset reconstruction companies (ARCs) to focus on governance and adhere to ethical conduct while doing business.

Deputy Governor J. Swaminathan, while urging ARCs to foster a culture of integrity and ethical conduct, highlighted several supervisory concerns in the functioning of ARCs.

He asked the entities to adopt a "regulation plus" approach where "there is compliance with both the letter of the regulation and also its spirit."

"Boards should accord due importance to assurance functions, namely, risk management, compliance and internal audit," he said. "These functions play a critical role in identifying and mitigating risks, ensuring compliance with laws and regulations as well as safeguarding the organisation's reputation," Mr. Swaminathan added.

'Sound governance'

Deputy Governor M. Rajeshwar Rao highlighted the importance of sound governance which would provide a strong foundation for the ARCs to build a robust business model.

"The onus in this regard lies largely with the Boards of the ARCs and the top functionaries who will have to develop a strong and institutional culture based on these principles," he said.

He also stressed the need for responsible conduct in recovery process and emphasised that ARCs should follow transparent and non-discriminatory practices in line with the comprehensive fair practice code put in place by the Reserve Bank.

The RBI had on Friday organised the conference for the directors and MD/CEOs of ARCs in Mumbai.

U.N. forecasts 2.7% growth for world economy

Press Trust of India
UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations reported improved prospects for the world economy since its January forecast on Thursday, pointing to a better outlook in the U.S and several large emerging economies including India.

According to its mid-2024 report, the world economy is now projected to grow by 2.7% this year, up from the 2.4% forecast in its January report - and by 2.8% in 2025. A 2.7% growth rate would equal growth in 2023, but still be lower than the 3% growth rate before the pandemic.

Govt. worried about job losses due to AI, yet comforted by reskilling prospects: MeitY secy.

Nihal Krishan
NEW DELHI

The Government is worried about the effects of cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) automation on jobs and industry in India, and a dearth of white collar jobs that are the most-affected by AI tools at the moment, but comforted that several science and tech graduates could be quickly retrained, a senior government official said.

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) Secretary S. Krishnan said that besides major retraining and re-skilling efforts around AI, the government was also in support of helping manufacturing companies retrofit their supply chains with Internet of Things (IoT) devices that would collect the information and data needed for AI models to work in industrial scenarios.

S. Krishnan

"When you talk to companies, many people feel that the newer AI jobs, many of those will get created in India, for two or three reasons. One, that we have a large number of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) trained graduates, many of whom have exposure to AI far more than any other country in the world. And they can be quickly retrained into that space," he said at a Confederation of Indian Industry's event on Friday.

MALABAR CEMENTS LIMITED
(A Government of Kerala Undertaking)
An ISO 9001:2015, 14001:2015 Company, Walayar Post, Palakkad - 678624 - Kerala
Email : materials@malabarcements.com/bulkmcl@malabarcements.com

TENDER NOTICE

visit www.etenders.kerala.gov.in for participation of e-tenders

❖ Cement Storage Silo-1 cleaning / coating material retrieval and renewal of aeration cloths and allied works in Walayar Plant. ❖ Renewal of points crossing (No.102 and 103) with PSC layout at MCL railway siding at Walayar. ❖ Miscellaneous Civil Works at Plant (2024). ❖ Miscellaneous structural Works at Plant (2024). ❖ Service contract for drilling of 4.5 inch dia blasting holes at MCL Mines. ❖ Providing AMC for SAP functional/technical modules/SAP portal/DR. ❖ Disposal of MS & MS/CI/GI Scrap Materials. Pls. Visit : www.mstcecommerce.com)

Sd/- MANAGING DIRECTOR

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, CHITTORGARH

No. :- SBM/2024-25/744-45 Dated :- 09/05/2024

Press Release

Municipal Council area has been declared as ODF + in the cradle of the state government circular under Swachh Bharat Mission, if Someone special related to this have any objections can present his objection document by appearing in the municipal council office in 15 days, after this, no objection will be accepted.

Commissioner
Municipal Council Chittorgarh

Raj.Samwad/C/24/149

ओएनजीसी ONGC

RAJAHMUNDRY ASSET, RAJAHMUNDRY (A.P.)
INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR DEMAND ASSESSMENT

Malleswaram (16° 21' 30.02" N, 81° 17' 06.80" E)is an Oil & Gas field in Krishna district, A.P., which is producing about 40,000 SCMDof natural gas. In this regard, ONGC invites EOI from interested potential gas buyers / service providers for demand assessment of natural gas available on fall back basis from this field. The details of the available gas is provided in the table below:

Name of the Field	Gas quantity, SCMD	Proposed Delivery point	Expected Delivery Pressure, Kg/cm2g	Tentative period of availability
Malleswaram	40,000	MSAA EPS	1-3 Kg/cm2g	5 years

Inputs from prospective consumers on delivery point, gas quality etc. shall be suitably examined. Prospective buyers and service providers may log into https://tenders.ongc.co.in for further details on the gas profile and specifications. Also, requested to fill out the response sheet available in the website. For further details, please contact: barailly_sudamakumar@ongc.co.in / n_aadarsh@ongc.co.in

Government of Tamil Nadu
Arulmigu Dhandayuthapani Swamy Temple Palani.

Tender Notice for the Fasali Year 1434

Notice seeking tenders for materials to be procured for the Fasali year 1434 **(from the date of order to 30.06.2025)** in Arulmigu Dhandayuthapani Swamy Temple, Palani Town, Palani Taluk, Dindigul District. **(1) Website for submission of Tender:** The tenders are invited through the website **https://tntenders.gov.in**. The bidders must possess digital signature certificate for submission of bids online. **(2)** Last date for submission of tender : **19.06.2024, A.N 11.00 pm (3)** Date of Pre-Bid Meeting : **05.06.2024, F.N 12.00 pm (4)** Tender Opening Date and Time : **20.06.2024, F.N 11.00 am (5)** Venue of Tender opening : **Temple Head Office. Items of Tender: 1)** Supply of Karpooravalli Banana, Kudagu Banana and Mountain Banana for the production of Panchamirtham. **2)** Supply of 1/2kg capacity Laminated Composite Container with Lid from ISO Standard Companies **3)** Supply of 500gm capacity Pet Jar with Seal (WAD) from ISO Standard Companies **4)** Supply of 200gm capacity Pet Jar with Seal (WAD) from ISO Standard Companies.

Tender Deposit Amount and Solvency Amount: Sl.No. (1) Rs.**50.00** Lakh, (2) Rs.**20.00** Lakh, (3) Rs.**25.00** Lakh, (4) Rs.**25.00** Lakh, Tender Deposit should be paid as Nationalized Bank's Demand Draft payable at Palani in the name of "Joint Commissioner/Executive Officer, Arulmigu Dhandayuthapani Swami Temple, Palani" and upload the photocopy of DD in the website. The solvency certificate in the name of the bidder obtained from the local Tahsildar on or after the date of Tender Notice should be uploaded in the website. Those who are unable to provide solvency certificate can paid as Nationalized Bank's Demand Draft to the corresponding amount and upload the photocopy of DD in the website. The DD must be handover to the Temple Office before Tender open.

S.Marimuthu
Joint Commissioner/Executive Officer
DIPR / 1732 / Tender / 2024

K.Chandramohan, Chairman of Trust Board
K.M.Subramaniyan, Member of Trust Board
S.Manimaran, Member of Trust Board
R.Rajasekaran, Member of Trust Board
K.Sathya, Member of Trust Board

TIME EXTENSION - REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM TECHNOPARK HARMONY@WORK

keralaIT EMPOWERING THE FUTURE

RFP No: 91/2023-24

Proposals are invited from Technical Consultants for providing 'Consultancy Service Contract for the preparation of Masterplan for Technopark Phase IV Campus (Technocity)'. The last date for the submission of RFP is extended upto **31.05.2024.**

For further details, please visit
https://www.technopark.org/tenders

Date: 16-05-2024
Trivandrum

Chief Executive Officer
Technopark

(D3/281/2024/I&PRD)

MOSCOW

Reports say 7 injured in explosion at St Petersburg military academy

GETTY IMAGES

Russian media on Friday reported an explosion at the Budyonny Military Academy of the Signal Corps in St Petersburg. State news agency *RIA* cited local officials as saying a resident had reported a blast at the military academy. Baza, a Telegram channel linked to law enforcement, said that seven people had been injured. REUTERS

KATHMANDU

Nepal latest to ban Indian spice brands over safety concerns

REUTERS

Nepal has become the latest jurisdiction to ban the import and sale of Everest and MDH — two popular Indian spice brands — after reports that some of their products contained ethylene oxide, a cancer-causing pesticide, officials said on Friday. Hong Kong and Singapore had banned products from them last month. AFP

SAN FRANCISCO

Man convicted of attacking Pelosi's husband sentenced to 30 years

AP

David DePape, 44, the man convicted of attempting to kidnap then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and attacking her husband with a hammer was sentenced to 30 years in prison on Friday. The attack on Paul Pelosi, who was 82 then, was captured on police body camera video and sent shockwaves through the political world. AP

ROUEN

Man suspected of setting fire to synagogue shot dead by police

AFP

French police shot and killed a man armed with a knife and a metal bar who is suspected of having started a fire that charred and blackened the insides of a synagogue in the Normandy city of Rouen early on Friday, an attack the Interior Minister said was "clearly" anti-Semitic and which infuriated Jewish leaders. AP

'China-Russia partnership is not directed against anyone'

An emerging multipolar world is now taking shape before our eyes, says Russian President Vladimir Putin as he concludes his two-day visit to China; he praises talks with Xi as substantive

Associated Press
BEIJING

Russian President Vladimir Putin concluded a two-day visit to China on Friday, emphasising the countries' burgeoning strategic ties as well as his own personal relationship with Chinese leader Xi Jinping as they sought to present an alternative to U.S. global influence. Mr. Putin praised the growth in bilateral trade while touring a China-Russia Expo in the northeastern city of Harbin. He met students at the Harbin Institute of Technology, which is said to work closely with the People's Liberation Army.

Harbin, capital of China's Heilongjiang province, was once home to many Russian expatriates and retains some of that history in its architecture, such as the central St. Sophia Cathedral, a former Russian Orthodox church.

Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping holding an informal meeting at the Zhongnanhai leadership compound in Beijing on Thursday. AFP

Speaking to reporters, Mr. Putin thanked Xi and praised their talks as "substantive," saying he spent "almost a whole day, from morning till evening" with the Chinese leader and other officials in Beijing the previous day.

The partnership between China and Russia "is not directed against anyone," Mr. Putin said in a veiled reference to the West. "It is aimed at one thing: creating better conditions for the development of our countries and improving the well-being of the people of China and the Russian Federation."

Rebuke for U.S.

But he still had a backhanded rebuke for the U.S., and others who oppose the Moscow-Beijing relationship, saying an "emerging multipolar world ... is now taking shape before our eyes".

"And it is important that those who are trying to maintain their monopoly on decision-making in the world on all issues ... do everything in their power to ensure that this process goes naturally," he said.

'China, Russia supporting each other's expansion'

Associated Press
TAIPEI

Russia and China are helping each other expand their territorial reach, and democracies must push back against authoritarian states that threaten their rights and sovereignty, Taiwan's outgoing Foreign Minister, Joseph Wu, said in an interview. His comments came as Russian President Vladimir Putin was on a visit to China.

Mr. Wu called on democracies to align in countering Russia and China's military assertiveness in Europe, the South China Sea and beyond. China threatens to invade Taiwan, a self-ruled democracy that it claims as its own territory. He added that Beijing is trying to change the status quo with Taiwan.

Russian forces pressing ahead with Kharkiv attack

Agence France-Presse
KYIV

Russian forces were pressing ahead on Friday with their offensive in northeast Ukraine as President Vladimir Putin said there were no current plans to occupy Kharkiv city, the regional capital.

On a trip to China, Mr. Putin said the assault was direct retaliation for Ukrainian shelling of Russia's border regions and that Moscow was trying to create a "security zone".

"This is their fault because they have shelled and continue to shell residential neighbourhoods in border areas," Mr. Putin told reporters, adding there was no intention at this stage to take Kharkiv with its population of over one million about 40 km from the front lines.

Pilots of the Sharp Kartuza division of FPV kamikaze drones prepare for a combat flight in Kharkiv on Thursday. GETTY IMAGES

Moscow launched the surprise offensive into Ukraine's north east on May 10, sending thousands of troops across the border and unleashing artillery fire on several settlements, including the almost deserted town of Vovchansk.

Resisting onslaught

Oleg Synegubov, Governor of the Kharkiv region, said Russian forces were trying to surround Vovchansk, which had a pre-war population of around 18,000, and that Ukraine's forces were "resisting" the Russian onslaught. "The enemy has actually started to destroy the city. It is not just dangerous to be there, but impossible," Mr. Synegubov said in a briefing.

But he warned Russia was also gaining ground near Lukyantsi, a village much further west that Kyiv pulled back from earlier this week amid heavy fire.

Adani wind energy project challenged in Sri Lanka's SC

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

Adani Green Energy's wind energy project, coming up in Sri Lanka's northern Mannar and Pooneryn districts, has been challenged in the island's apex court on grounds of potential environmental impact and "lack of transparency".

The Wildlife and Nature Protection Society (WNPS), one of Sri Lanka's oldest environmental organisations set up over a century ago, on Thursday filed a Fundamental Rights petition at the Supreme Court, with the aim of "protecting the unique ecosystem of Mannar Island".

A petition argues that the project 'poses a severe threat to the island's unique biodiversity'

No details of grant

The petition argues that the project "poses a severe threat to the island's unique biodiversity and pristine landscapes," especially in Mannar. Mannar is the "southernmost point of the Central Asian Flyway used by innumerable migratory species", while also being home to several indigenous water birds and bat species, the WNPS said.

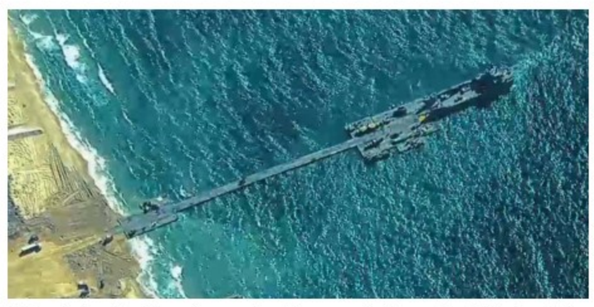
The petition also notes that while the project has been portrayed as a "Government-to-Government initiative with India" , no details of contributions, grants, or loans from the Indian government have been disclosed.

First aid shipment driven across a new pier into the Gaza Strip, says U.S. military

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

Trucks carrying badly needed aid for the Gaza Strip rolled across a newly built U.S. pier and into the besieged enclave for the first time on Friday as Israeli restrictions on border crossings and heavy fighting hindered the delivery of food and other supplies.

The shipment is the first in an operation that American military officials anticipate could scale up to 150 truckloads a day, all while Israel presses in on the southern city of Rafah in its 7-month offensive against Hamas.



Trident, the floating pier, on the Gaza coast, through which the U.S. military said aid deliveries began on Thursday. AFP

But the U.S. and aid groups warn that the floating pier project is not a substitute for land deliveries that could bring in all the food, water and fuel needed in Gaza. Before the war, more than 500 truckloads entered the territory on an average day.

The operation's success also remains tenuous because of the risk of militant attack, logistical hurdles and a growing shortage of fuel for the trucks to run due to the Israeli blockade of Gaza. Aid agencies say they are running out of food and fuel in southern Gaza, while the U.S. Agency for International Development and the World Food Program say famine has already taken hold in Gaza's north.

Civilians torched aid truck, says Israel Army

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

Israel's military said on Friday that "dozens of Israeli civilians" set fire the previous evening to an aid truck in the occupied West Bank headed for Gaza. Local media reported that Israeli settlers were behind the attack, which the Army said injured the driver as well as Israeli soldiers. The incident took place near Kokhav Hashahar, an Israeli settlement in West Bank.

Sport

Schauffele scintillates with a record 62 to be on top of the leaderboard

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

Agence France-Presse
LOUISVILLE

Xander Schauffele matched the lowest round in Major golf history on Thursday, firing a nine-under-par 62, to seize command after the opening day of the PGA Championship.

The reigning Olympic champion started off the 10th tee and birdied five of his first nine holes, then birdied four more after the turn in a bogey-free round for a three-shot lead at rain-softened Valhalla.

He set Valhalla's course record, breaking the 63 fired by Spain's Jose Maria Olazabal in the first round of the 2000 PGA Championship.

Sizzling start: Schauffele fired in nine birdies during an incredible bogey-free first round. GETTY IMAGES

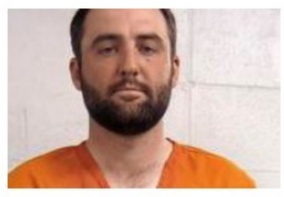
"It feels great, Schauffele said. "If someone told me I'd shoot nine-under I'd have taken it. It's a great start to a big tournament. I can't nit-pick. I'll take a 62 in any Major any day," said Schauffele.

The 30-year-old American topped the leaderboard over countrymen Tony Finau, Mark Hubbard and Sahith Theegala on 65.

Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy, South Korean Tom Kim, Scotsman Robert MacIntyre, Belgium's Thomas Detry and Americans Tom Hoge, Collin Morikawa and Maverick McNealy shared fifth on 66.

Thursday's 64 players under-par were the second-most below par after any round in tournament history.

Top scores: 62: Xander Schauffele (USA); **65:** Tony Finau (USA), Sahith Theegala (USA), Mark Hubbard (USA); **66:** Rory McIlroy (NIR), Robert MacIntyre (Sco), Tom Hoge (USA), Tom Kim (Kor), Thomas Detry (Bel), Collin Morikawa (USA), Maverick McNealy (USA).



Scheffler pulled up for traffic violation

Reuters
LOUISVILLE

Scottie Scheffler was arrested on Friday morning on his way to the PGA Championship, with images showing him handcuffed as he was taken to jail for not following police orders during a pedestrian fatality investigation. In a span of three hours, Scheffler was arrested, gave a mug shot in an orange jail shirt, and returned 56 minutes before his tee off.

AFI to penalise coaches for athletes' doping offence

Y.B. Sarangi
KOLKATA

To curb the doping menace, the Athletics Federation of India has decided to take action against coaches whose athletes commit doping violations. The AFI, following its discussion with various stakeholders for about six months, took this important decision at its executive committee meeting on Friday.

"Coaches of the athletes who are caught for doping and are sanctioned will get a similar punishment. It is high time people were called out, named and shamed," AFI president Adille Sumariwalla said at a virtual press conference.

Sumariwalla. FILE PHOTO

"We will suspend the coaches (who have coached dope offenders), we will inform departments concerned and they will not be allowed to enter the stadiums. These people have to be removed from whatever posts they are holding. "We had talks with various agencies regarding this. If the coaches take a share of the athletes' cash award, then they should also get the stick."

The AFI chief said the athletes needed to declare their coaches' names in dope control forms and all the coaches would have to be registered with the federation. Sumariwalla said the Olympic bound athletes would attend a coaching camp in Poland from July 5.

The AFI also decided to decentralise the coaching camps after the Olympics, conduct competitions at state and district levels through a similar calendar, improve the technical conduct of the meets (including taking action against officials who fail to carry out their duty properly) and digitise merit certificates with the help of Government's Digilocker app (to stop forgery of certificates).

BENCH STRENGTH

Super Kings' Bravo not fretting over injuries to his bowlers

K. MURALI KUMAR

CSK has missed the likes of Matheesha Pathirana, Mustafizur Rahman, and Deepak Chahar at different points for different reasons. But CSK bowling coach Dwayne Bravo looked at the positives. "You can see the bowlers who replaced them, they have been like-for-like. That shows the depth. You have to have a bench."

CLARITY

Won't spend much time deciding whether to bat or bowl: Malolan

K. MURALI KUMAR

Malolan Rangarajan said that RCB will not stress over the win equations, weather and the toss. "The good thing is that it is crystal clear what we need to do. We won't spend much time deciding whether to bat or bowl. We have been defending targets. We won't be thinking we should be restricting them for this and that."

LUCKY NUMBER

'Every time RCB has played on the 18th, I think it has won'

K. MURALI KUMAR

The number 18 is writ large on Saturday's game. Virat Kohli sports No. 18; RCB needs to win by 18 runs or chase in 18.1 overs. Malolan had a witty take. "Every time RCB has played on the 18th, I think RCB has won. On a serious note, we have played knockout matches for the last six games. So nothing changes."

TOP PICK

BCCI has approached Gambhir for head coach job, says report

K.R. DEEPAK

The Board of Control for Cricket in India approached Gautam Gambhir to replace Rahul Dravid as India's head coach, according to a report from *ESPNcricinfo*. The report said that the KKR mentor is BCCI's top pick to become India's next head coach as Dravid's tenure comes to an end after the 2024 T20 World Cup.

RCB and CSK face off in a make-or-break contest

The home team needs a win, with conditions applied — assuming there is a full 20-over match and a score of 200, it has to beat Ruturaj's men by 18 runs or chase down the target with about 11 balls to spare in order to make the playoffs

IPL-17

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

On Sunday, just over 24 hours after the first ball of the Royal Challengers Bengaluru-Chennai Super Kings contest is sent down at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, the last round of fixtures in the English Premier League will commence.

All 10 football matches will begin at the same time – both at the start and after half-time – and no team will have the benefit of knowing beforehand what has happened elsewhere. Manchester City and Arsenal are separated by two points at the top and are set for a pulsating race to the finish.

Alien concept

Such a level playing field has so far proved alien to the Indian Premier League, and thus, RCB and CSK know exactly what is required of them on Saturday to get into the playoffs.

RCB needs a win, with conditions applied. Assuming there is a full 20-over match and a score of 200, it has to beat CSK by 18 runs or chase down the target with about 11 balls to spare.

Any other result, including a washout – the forecast is for rain – will send CSK through.

Ruturaj Gaikwad's men can potentially zoom up to second if they triumph, and Sunrisers Hyderabad and Rajasthan Royals lose on Sunday.

RCB has won five fixtures in a row and it's a minor miracle that it is still in contention after once being the favourite to collect the wooden spoon.

But with Will Jacks returning to England, all eyes will be on Glenn Maxwell. The 35-year-old has totalled a paltry 36 runs from seven innings this campaign, but a replacement of his calibre is not something many teams have.

CSK has alternated between victory and defeat over the last six games. And against a destructive batting unit like RCB's, its bowlers have to be spot on.

With Englishman Moeen Ali having left the Indian shores, one of Mitchell Santner or Richard Gleeson is likely to play.

Time for its A game: CSK can potentially zoom up to second in the table with a victory. K. MURALI KUMAR

Today's match

RCB vs CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

Bengaluru, 7.30 P.M.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 32

RCB 10 | CSK 21 | NR 1

PREVIOUS MEETING

CSK won by six wickets, 2024

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA

Will the fickle Bengaluru weather spoil the Kohli-Dhoni shoot-out?

Saturday blues: The threat of a wash-out looms large over the RCB-CSK contest. K. MURALI KUMAR

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

Bengaluru's weather is so notoriously fickle that its tantrums have acquired cult status. On Saturday, the city faithful will be praying that it behaves, for a washout against Chennai Super Kings will send their beloved Royal Challengers Bengaluru out.

There is indeed an inglorious tradition of rain affecting at least one RCB home game in an IPL season. An unrelenting summer has ensured that RCB has dodged the bullet six times in the 2024 edition.

However, Saturday's forecast is for good amounts of precipitation, and it seems like luck may have finally run out.

There is, of course, the state-of-the-art SubAir drainage system that can get the ground ready in no time. And if the skies relent for two hours, a five-over match is eminently possible. But would five overs do justice to a clash that will be one of the last times Virat Kohli and M.S. Dhoni face-off?

Another variable is the pitch. This season, the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium has been far from the batting paradise it usually is; only twice has the 200-run mark been breached in 12 innings (RCB vs. SRH). But the last time CSK and RCB met in Bengaluru, 444 runs were scored. A repeat is in the hands of the weather gods.

Pooran's pyrotechnics help Super Giants finish on a high

Shayan Acharya
MUMBAI

It's not for nothing that Nicholas Pooran is rated so highly in white-ball cricket. At the Wankhede Stadium against Mumbai Indians on Friday, the Caribbean power-hitter's blitz (75, 29b, 5x4, 8x6) piloted Lucknow Super Giants to 214 for six and set up an 18-run win in its final IPL fixture of the season.

A slow start by LSG captain K.L. Rahul (55, 41b, 3x4, 3x6) allowed the home team to keep things under check until the 11th over before Pooran took charge. Walking in with his team at 69 for three, Pooran counter-attacked. He hit a couple of fours and as many sixes off Anshul Kamboj before smashing two huge sixes off MI skipper Hardik Pandya.

Pooran brought up his third half-century of the season off just 19 deliveries and forged a 109-run stand with Rahul for the fourth wicket. He was at his scintillating best in the 15th over as hit Arjun Tendulkar's first two deliveries for sixes before the bowler walked off the field due to cramps. The left-hander then hoisted Naman Dhir into the stands before missing a maximum off the fourth by a whisker. A single and a six from Rahul completed the over.

Just when he looked on course for a hundred, Pooran was caught by Suryakumar Yadav at long-on off Nuwan Thushara. Arshad Khan was dismissed off the next ball before Piyush Chawla performed a team hat-trick, removing Rahul off the first delivery of the next over.

Ayush Badoni slammed 19 off the final over bowled by Romario Shepherd .

MI started its chase briskly before rain interrupted play for 45 minutes. With Rohit Sharma (68, 38b, 10x4, 3x6) in good nick and Dewald Brevis lending good support, the host cruised to 78 for no loss in eight overs.

Rohit hit speedsters Mohsin Khan and Naveen-ul-Haq for a flurry of boundaries while Brevis joined in with a four and six off Naveen in the ninth over. The South African's innings ended when he was caught by Krunal Pandya.

In the next over, Krunal dismissed Suryakumar Yadav for a duck before Ravi Bishnoi ended Rohit's stay. Though Naman Dhir (62 n.o., 28b, 4x4, 5x6) battled on, the target proved too stiff for Hardik's men.

Belligerent: Pooran unleashed eight sixes and five fours during his free-flowing innings. PTI

SCOREBOARD

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS

K.L. Rahul c Thushara b Chawla 55 (*41b, 3x4, 3x6*), Devdutt Padikkal lbw b Thushara 0 (*1b*), Marcus Stoinis lbw b Chawla 28 (*22b, 5x4*), Deepak Hooda c Wadhera b Chawla 11 (*9b, 1x4*), Nicholas Pooran c Suryakumar b Thushara 75 (*29b, 5x4, 8x6*), Arshad Khan c Wadhera b Thushara 0 (*1b*), Ayush Badoni (not out) 22 (*10b, 1x4, 2x6*), Krunal Pandya (not out) 12 (*7b, 1x4, 1x6*); Extras (w-11): 11; Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 214.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-1 (Padikkal, 0.3 overs), 2-49 (Stoinis, 5.6), 3-69 (Hooda, 9.3), 4-178 (Pooran, 16.5), 5-178 (Arshad, 16.6), 6-178 (Rahul, 17.1).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING

Thushara 4-0-28-3, Arjun 2.2-0-22-0, Anshul 3-0-48-0, Chawla 4-0-29-3, Wadhera 2-0-13-0, Hardik 2-0-27-0, Naman 0.4-0-17-0, Shepherd 2-0-30-0.

MUMBAI INDIANS

Rohit Sharma **(Impact Player in place of Thushara)** c Mohsin b Bishnoi 68 (*38b, 10x4, 3x6*), Dewald Brevis c Hardik b Naveen 23 (*20b, 1x4, 2x6*), Suryakumar Yadav c Bishnoi b Krunal 0 (*3b*), Ishan Kishan b Naveen 14 (*15b, 1x4*), Hardik Pandya c Naveen b Mohsin 16 (*13b, 1x4, 1x6*), Nehal Wadhera c Krunal b Bishnoi 1 (*3b*), Naman Dhir (not out) 62 (*28b, 4x4, 5x6*), Romario Shepherd (not out) 1 (*1b*); Extras (nb-1, w-10): 11; Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 196.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-88 (Brevis, 8.4), 2-89 (Suryakumar, 9.2), 3-97 (Rohit, 10.5), 4-116 (Hardik, 13.3), 5-120 (Wadhera, 14.2), 6-188 (Kishan, 19.3).

SUPER GIANTS BOWLING

Arshad 2-0-11-0, Henry 2-0-24-0, Krunal 4-0-29-1, Mohsin 4-0-45-1, Naveen **(Impact Player in place of Badoni)** 4-0-50-2, Bishnoi 4-0-37-2.

Toss: MI; **PoM:** Pooran.

LSG won by 18 runs.

Points table

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
Kolkata Knight Riders (Q)	13	9	3	1	19	1.428
Rajasthan Royals (Q)	13	8	5	0	16	0.273
Sunrisers Hyderabad (Q)	13	7	5	1	15	0.406
Chennai Super Kings	13	7	6	0	14	0.528
Delhi Capitals (E)	14	7	7	0	14	-0.377
Lucknow Super Giants (E)	14	7	7	0	14	-0.667
Royal Challengers	13	6	7	0	12	0.387
Gujarat Titans (E)	14	5	7	2	12	-1.063
Punjab Kings (E)	13	5	8	0	10	-0.347
Mumbai Indians (E)	14	4	10	0	8	-0.318

Q: Qualified | E: Eliminated

Filled with gratitude I could play 150 games for country: Chhetri

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

Sunil Chhetri prefers to be remembered as a hard-working footballer who gave his best for the country. This is what the owner of a record 150 caps for India had to say a day after announcing that he will retire from international football after the second round match (2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers) against Kuwait. The match will be played at the Salt Lake Stadium on June 6.

"When people think about me, I should be remembered as a hard-working person. I could play 150 matches because of it. A lot of attributes are required for a player to do well, but this is one characteristic that I want to leave behind me," Chhetri said at a media interaction on Friday. "And, of course, I want to be remembered as the most good-looking player too," he added with a chuckle when asked about the legacy he wished to leave behind.

The India captain said he never aspired for records and was happy contributing to the National team for 19 years. "I am filled with gratitude and have no hollow feelings.

Chhetri. K. MURALI KUMAR

When I started my journey with the Indian team, I never thought I would be scoring so many goals. At no point did I think of scoring 100 because it was never a part of any plan or dream. I am really fortunate I could play 150 matches and could score 94 goals for my country," he said.

Chhetri said the decision to retire was instinctive and had nothing to do with fitness. "It is of prime importance that I bring value to the team. I felt I needed to leave the national team, and I am doing so at a time when there are so many good players waiting to take my place," he said.

He said his next focus was on doing well for BFC in the next ISL season.

INBRIEF

Lopez double earns Barcelona a win at Almeria

Young Barcelona midfielder Fermin Lopez struck twice to secure his team a hard-fought 2-0 win at Almeria on Thursday in La Liga. The 21-year-old reached 10 goals for the season in his breakthrough campaign on a night Barcelona struggled but eventually overcame its already-relegated opponent.

The results: Las Palmas 2 (Suarez 27, Moleiro 64) drw with Real Betis 2 (Marmol 21-og, Perez 49); Almeria 0 lost to Barcelona 2 (Lopez 14, 67); Real Sociedad 1 (Silva 3) bt Valencia 0.

Tanisha-Ashwini and Satwik-Chirag pairs move up

The star men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty along with the women's combine of Tanisha Crasto and Ashwini Ponnappa advanced to the semifinals of Thailand Open Super 500 in Bangkok on Friday. However, it was curtains for Meiraba Luwang Maisnam in men's singles after going down to World champion Kunlavut Vitidsarn in his last eight match.

The results (quarterfinals): Men: Kunlavut Vitidsarn (Ina) bt Meiraba Luwang Maisnam 21-12, 21-5; **Doubles:** Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty bt Junaidi Arif & Roy King Ya (Mas) 21-7, 21-14.
Women: Tanisha Crasto & Ashwini Ponnappa bt Lee Yu Lim & Shin Seung Chan (Tpe) 21-15, 21-23, 21-19.

Tuchel to leave Bayern as talks fail for extension

Thomas Tuchel says he is still leaving Bayern Munich after talks on extending his stay at the club fell through. The coach said on Friday that he held talks with the club on a '180-degree turn' that would have seen him stay. "We found no agreement on further cooperation so the agreement from February remains in force."

Aishwary and Anjum ensure Olympic berth with top fare

Olympic quota winner Swapnil ends up with the lowest total of 573, but with earlier scores of 592, 587 and 587 retains his quota for Paris, ahead other quota winner Akhil

SHOOTING TRIALS

Sports Bureau

Olympian Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar sustained his strong run and shot 591 to top men's rifle 3-position event in the fourth Olympic shooting trials at the Madhya Pradesh Academy in Bhopal on Friday.

After an indifferent start in the first trial when he stumbled to a score of 576 in Delhi, Aishwary has been pretty strong with scores of 595 and 590 in the last two trials. He thus ensured his spot for the Games.

Olympic quota winner Swapnil Kussale ended up with the lowest total of 573, but had done enough earlier with scores of 592, 587 and 587 to retain his quota for Paris, ahead of Olympic quota winner Akhil Sheoran.

Crack shot: Naveen shot 246.8, a score better than the WR of 246.5, to beat Sarabjot in the air pistol event. RITU RAJ KONWAR

In women's event, Asian Games gold medallist and world record holder Sift Kaur Samra shot 593 to seal her berth. Olympian Anjum Moudgil shot 588 to seal the second Olympic berth, comfortably ahead of Ashi Chouksey, Olympic quota winner Shriyanka Sadangi and Nischal.

The results:
10m air pistol: Men: 1. Naveen 246.8 (579); 2. Sarabjot Singh 242.4 (581); 3. Arjun Singh Cheema 218.8 (583); 4. Varun Tomar 197.3 (577); 5. Ravinder Singh 176.9 (581).

Women: 1. Manu Bhaker 241.0 (577); 2. Esha Singh 240.2 (576); 3. Rhythm Sangwan 220.3 (573); 4. Surbhi Rao 199.3 (574); 5. Palak Gulia 179.1 (576).

10m air rifle: Men: 1. Sri Karthik Sabari Raj 252.5 (10.4) 630.5; 2. Divyansh Singh Panwar 252.5 (10.3) 631.4; 3. Arjun Babuta 229.9 (632.2); 4. Rudrankksh Patil 207.1 (632.0); 5. Sandeep Singh 185.9 (631.6).

Women: 1. Ramita Jindal 252.6 (630.8); 2. Elavenil Valarivan 252.1 (634.4); 3. Nancy Mandhotra 230.99 (629.4); 4. Mehuli Ghosh 209.1 (628.4); 5. Tilottama Sen 187.6 (632.4).

50m rifle 3-position: Men: 1. Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar 591; 2. Niraj Kumar 586; 3. Akhil Sheoran 586; 4. Chain Singh 586; 5. Swapnil Kusale 573.

Women: 1. Sift Kaur Samra 593; 2. Anjum Moudgil 588; 3. Nischal 587; 4. Shriyanka Sadangi 580; 5. Ashi Chouksey 577.

SNAPSHOTS

Swiatek to face Sabalenka for title

ROME: Iga Swiatek swept past Coco Gauff to reach the Rome Open final on Thursday where Aryna Sabalenka will stand in her way of a third title and her bid to match a Serena Williams record.
World No. 1 Swiatek eased to a 6-4, 6-3 win over US Open champion Gauff for an 11th straight clay-court victory while second seed Sabalenka defeated Danielle Collins 7-5, 6-2.
Other results: Men:
Semifinals: Tabilo vs Zverev.
Quarterfinals: Jarry bt Tsitsipas 3-6, 7-5, 6-4.

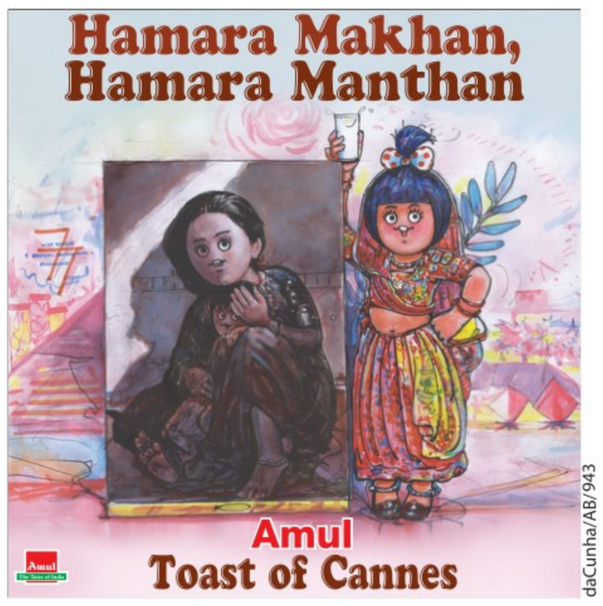
Japan wins a thriller against India

SHYMKENT (KAZAKHSTAN): Maaya Rajeshwaran won her singles 6-2, 7-6(0) against Hikari Yamamoto, but Japan snatched a thrilling 2-1 victory over India in the quarterfinals of the Asia-Oceania Junior Billie Jean King Cup under-16 girls tennis' tournament here.

The results (quarterfinals):
Japan bt India 2-1 (Kanon Sawashiro bt Diya Ramesh 6-2, 6-1; Hikari Yamamoto lost to Maaya Rajeshwaran 2-6, 6-7(0); Kurea Hayasaka & Kanon Sawasshiro bt Maaya & Diya 3-6, 7-5, [10-2]).

Parveen suspended, loses Olympic quota

KOLKATA: India lost the women's 57kg quota place as boxer Parveen Hooda, who qualified for the Games by securing a bronze medal in the Asian Games last October, was handed a 22-month backdated suspension from Friday for 'whereabouts' failure.
The suspension, which has been backdated by eight months, will effectively last for 14 months from May 17. As the quota place is allotted to the athlete in boxing, India would field another boxer in 57kg in the second World boxing qualifier starting in Bangkok on May 24.
The BFI has written to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to allow a fresh entry in 57kg but the chances of getting a go-ahead is remote due to the proximity of the qualifier.



BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Sumit stars in Hampinagara's win

Sumit's brace powered Hampinagara FC to a 4-0 victory over Bentex FC in the BDFA C-division football league here on Friday.
The results:
Hampinagara FC 4 (Sumit 6, 24, Hardeep Singh 51, Shivamani Mondal 60) bt Bentex FC 0; Bangalore Gorkha Boys FC 4 (Prajwal Pawar 28, Buddha Joy Chakma 50, Subrat Tiwari 58, Manoj Rao 60) bt Oriental FC 2 (Ruthvik 23, 60).

Akaash in lead in men's category

Akaash Ashok Kumar snatched the lead in the Karnataka State Ranking Tenpin Bowling league at Amoeba Bowling Center here.
In the men's category, Akaash started his first block with high game of 243 in Game 1, and followed it up with games of 207, 215 and 185 in Game 2, Game 3 and Game 4 respectively. Akaash leads the table with total pinfall of 2361 in 12 games. Girish Gaba is in second spot with total pinfall of 2334, followed by Parvez Ahmed (2223). In the women's category at the end of two blocks of six games, Geetha Poojary is in lead with total pinfall of 1977.

High Camp posts win

High Camp defeated MPCA in the seventh Save Water Cup cricket tournament here.
The scores:
High Camp 140/4 in 20 overs (Kishanth 57, Siddhant 29) bt MPCA 112 in 19.4 overs (Akshobhya 46, Vikram 3/22).
DPS East 202/3 in 20 overs (Vishnu 88 n.o., Vedant 48) bt SJBHS 118/9 in 20 overs.

LIVE TELECAST

Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 7 p.m.
Formula One: Romagna GP (Qualifying), F1 TV, F1 TV Pro App & FanCode, 7.30 p.m.
IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 7.30 p.m.
Serie A: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 9.30 p.m. & 12.15 a.m. (Sunday)
Golf: U.S. PGA Championship, FanCode, 10.30 p.m.

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